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Arnold, Samuel James
Man and wife

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A48M2
1809

MAN AND WIFE;

OR,

MORE SECRETS THAN ONE:

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED

AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY

SAMUEL JAMES ARNOLD, Esq.

THE SEVENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS, BRIDGE STREET, BLACKFRIARS.

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1809.

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THE undivided Expression of public Approbation with which this Comedy has been received, has given it a Value in the Author's Estimation greatly exceeding that which his own vanity induced him to attach to it. It is this increased Estimate of its Value which encourages him to present it to a Gentleman whose universal Acquirements are as much the Admiration of his Friends, as his polished Manners are the Delight of all who know him.

It is therefore inscribed,

With the greatest Respect and Esteem, to

JOHN SYMMONS, ESQ.

By his much obliged, and obedient Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO the Performers who have so essentially contributed to the very flattering success of MAN and WIFE, the Author offers his best thanks; and if he omits, in this public acknowledgment, to enumerate their separate claims, it is, because he fears, where *all* are entitled to his gratitude, he can but imperfectly express the different degrees which the various talents exerted in his favour, with so much justice demand.

He cannot however forbear particularizing Mrs. JORDAN, to whose kindness he is indebted for the introduction of the Comedy to the Managers; tho' as that Lady is ever as anxious to do a friendly action as she is privately to perform benevolent ones, he is convinced, that acknowledgment on this subject, is neither desired nor expected.

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PROLOGUE.

As Plays increase, to strike out something *new*,
What, in the name of wit, can Authors do?
For ages past they've cull'd from nature's store,
And drawn the self-same features, o'er and o'er.—
Many, 'tis true, have nature's paths forsaken,
Drawn apes for beaux, and wags for wits' mistaken;
Strange fools and coxcombs they have plac'd in view,
Yet copied life, and made the picture true!

But Man and Wife!—I fear you'll all exclaim,
Can any novelty be found in them?
For if the Bard should sketch them gay and free,
Obliging, kind, as Man and Wife *should be*—
You all, methinks, would cavil at each feature,
And say—the thing was *new*—but out of nature;
And should he make them live like *Dog* and *Cat*,
Alack-the-day! there's nothing new in that!

Still, all these pictures of domestic strife
Vary, according to the rank in life—
Wond'rous the diff'rence 'twixt the wedded pair
Of Broad St. Giles's, and St. James's Square!
The high-bred pair once wed, are *one*, and therefore
Are *two* directly without *why* or *wherefore!*
He at the clubs the fatal elbow shakes,
Returns at sunrise, and at sunset wakes—
While *she*, at routs the *war* of elbows dares,
Half squeez'd to death—delightful—on the stairs;
But what cares she for squeezing, who displays
The iron fence of Mrs. Bailey's stays?
He desperate games—she braves the desperate throngs,
Here rattle dice—*there*—louder—rattle tongues—
Separate in tastes, pursuits, and in expence—
Alike in nothing—save indifference—
Till separate *interests*, separate claims advance
And end, too oft, in separate maintenance!
Quarrels in lower life, 'twixt John and Joan
By very different characters are known!
His is the weaker side in wordy strife
For *talking's* still the charter of the *wife!*
But John has argument to *strike* her *dumb*—
'Tis in a stick—the thickness of his thumb!
Such as his *right*, did once a grave judge name,
And when did *John* forget his *rights* to claim!
But soft—our bard to-night has drawn from life,
An intermediate kind of Man and Wife!
And in that title 'twill perhaps appear,
That something more is meant,—than meets the ear!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord Austencourt	Mr. Holland.
Sir Rowland Austencourt	Mr. Powell.
Charles Austencourt	Mr. Elliston.
Sir Willoughby Worrett	Mr. Dowton.
Falkner Abel Growse	Mr. Wroughton.
Mr. Cornelius O'Dedimus	Mr. Johnstone.
Ponder	Mr. Matthews.
William	Mr. Webb.
Servant	Mr. Evans.
Countryman	Mr. Scriven.
Sailor	Mr. Smith.
Game-Keeper	Mr. Maddocks.
Parish-Officer	Mr. Sparks.
Lady Worrett	Mrs. Harlowe.
Helen Worrett	Mrs. Jordan.
Fanny	Mrs. H. Siddons.
Tiffany	Mrs. Scott.

MAN AND WIFE;

OR,

MORE SECRETS THAN ONE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Abel Growse's Cottage.*

Enter ABEL GROWSE *and* FANNY.

Ab. Gr. DON'T tell me of your sorrow and repentance girl—you've broke my heart—married hey? and privately too—and to a lord into the bargain! So, when you can hide it no longer, you condescend to tell me—think you that the wealth and title of Lord Austencourt, can silence the fears of a fond father's heart? Why should a lord marry a poor girl like you in private, if his intentions were honorable?—Who should restrain him from publicly avowing his wife?

Fanny. My dearest father—have but a little patience, and I'll explain all—

Ab. Gr. Who was present besides the parson at your wedding?—

Fanny. There was our neighbour, the attorney Sir—and one of his clerks—and they were all—

Ab. Gr. My heart sinks within me—but mark me. You may remember I was not always what now I seem to be.—I yesterday received intelligence, which but for this discovery had shed a gleam of joy over my remaining days—as it is, should your husband prove the villain I suspect him, that intelligence will afford me an opportunity to resume a character in life, which shall make this monster Lord tremble!—the wrongs of Abel Growse, the poor but upright man, might have been pleaded in vain to him, but as I shall soon appear, it shall go hard but I will make the great man shrink before me, even in his plenitude of pride and power.

Fanny. You terrify me Sir—indeed you do!

Ab. Gr. And so I would—I would prepare you for the worst that may befal us—for should this man, this Lord, who calls himself your husband——

Fanny. Dearest father what can you mean—who *calls* himself my husband—he *is* my husband.

Ab. Gr. If he *is* your husband, how does he dare to pay his addresses, as he now publicly does, to the daughter of Sir Willoughby Worrett, our neighbour. I may be mistaken—I'm in the midst here of old acquaintances, tho' in this guise theyknow me not—they shall soon see me amongst them—not a word of this I charge you; come girl—this lord shall own you. If he does not, we will seek our remedy in those laws which are at once the best guardians of our rights and the surest avengers of our wrongs—— [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Parlour in Sir* W. WORRETT'S *House.*

The Breakfast prepared—Urn, &c. Sir WILLOUGHBY *reading the Newspaper. He rises and rings the Bell—then pulls out his Watch.*

Sir W. Three quarters of an hour since breakfast was first announced to my wife!—my patience is exhausted. Oh wedlock, wedlock! why did I ever venture again into thy holy state—of misery! —of all the taxes laid on mankind by respect to society and the influence of example, no one is so burthensome as that which obliges a man to submit to a thousand ills at home, rather than be suspected of being a bad husband abroad!—(*enter Servant*) Go to your lady—

Serv. I told her ladyship five times before, Sir Willoughby, that breakfast was waiting.

Sir W. Then tell her once more, and that will make six, and say I earnestly request the favor she will hasten to breakfast, as while she stays, I starve.

Serv. Yes, Sir Willoughby—but she'll stop the longer for the message. (*Aside going out.*) [*Exit.*

Sir W. My wife is the very devil—it seems that she'd be miserable if she didn't think me happy—yet her tenderness is my eternal torment—her affection puts me in a fidget, and her fondness in a fever.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My lady says she wont detain you a moment, Sir Willoughby. [*Exit.*

Sir W. The old answer!—Then she's so nervous! A nervous wife is worse than a perpetual blister; and then, as the man says in the play, your nervous patients are always ailing but *never*

die! Zounds! why do I bear it? 'tis my folly, my weakness, to dread the censure of the world, and to sacrifice every comfort of my fire side, to the ideal advantage of being esteemed a *good husband.* *(Lady Worrett is heard speaking behind)* Hark?—now she begins her morning work, giving more orders in a minute than can be executed in a month—and teizing my daughter to death to teach her to keep her temper!—yet every body congratulates me on having so good a wife!—every body envies me so excellent an economist!—every body thinks me the happiest man alive! and nobody knows what a miserable mortal I am!

(*Lady W. behind*)—and harkye William—(*entering with Servant*) tell the coachman to bring the chariot in a quarter of an hour—and William—run with these books immediately to the Rector's—and William—bring up breakfast this moment.

Will. Yes, my lady—*(aside)*—Lord have mercy upon us! [*Exit.*

Lady W. My dear Sir Willoughby—I beg a thousand pardons, but you are always so indulgent that you really spoil me—I'm sure you must think me a tiresome creature.

Sir W. No—no, my life—not at all.—I should be very ungrateful if I didn't value you *just exactly* as *highly* as you deserve.

Lady W. I certainly *deserve* a good scolding—I do, indeed.—I think if you scolded me a little I should behave better.

Sir W. Well, then, as you encourage me, my love—I must own that a little more punctuality would greatly heighten the zest of your society.

Lady W. And yet, Sir Willoughby, you *must* acknowledge that my time is ever dedicated to that proper vigilance which the superintendance of so large an establishment undoubtedly requires.

Sir W. Why, true, my-love;—but somehow, I can't help thinking, that as my fortune is so ample, it is quite unnecessary that you should undergo so much fatigue: for instance, I *do* think that the wife of a baronet of 12,000l. a year owes it to her rank to be otherwise employed than in hunting after the house-maid, or sacrificing her time in the store-room in counting candles, or weighing out soap, starch, powder-blue, and brown sugar!

Lady W. *(in tears.)* This is unkind, Sir Willoughby—this is very unkind—

Sir W. So! as usual, here's a breeze springing up!—What the devil shall I say to soothe her?—Wife! wife! you drive me mad! You first beg me to scold you, and then are offended because I obligingly comply with your request.

Lady W. No, Sir Willoughby—I am only *surprized* that you should so little know the value of a wife, who daily degrades herself for your advantage.

Sir W. That's the very thing I complain of. You *do* degrade yourself—your economy, my-life, is downright parsimony; your vigilance is suspicion; your management is meanness; and you fidget your servants till you make them fretful, and then prudently discharge them because they will live with you no longer. Hey! odslife, I must soothe her! for if company comes and finds her in this humour, my dear-bought reputation as a good husband is lost for ever.—*(enter servant with breakfast.)* Come, come—my dear Lady Worrett, let us go to breakfast—Come *(sitting down to breakfast)* let us talk of something else—Come, take your tea.

Lady W. *(to servant.)* Send William to speak to me. [*Exit servant.*

Sir W. Where's Helen?

Lady W. I have desired her to copy a few articles into the family receipt book, before breakfast; for as her marriage will so shortly take place, it is necessary she should complete her studies.

Sir W. What—she's at work, I suppose, on the third folio volume.

Lady W. The *fifth* I believe.

Sir W. Heaven defend us!—I don't blame it—I don't censure it at all—but I believe the case is *rather* unprecedented for an heiress of 12,000*l.* a year to leave to posterity in her own hand writing, five folio volumes of recipes, for pickling, preserving, potting, and pastry, for stewing and larding, making ketchup and sour krout, oyster patties, barbecued pies, jellies, jams, soups, sour-sauce and sweetmeats.

Lady W. Oh Sir Willoughby, if young ladies of the present day paid more attention to such substantial acquirements, we should have better wives and better husbands.

Sir W. Why that is singularly just—

Lady W. Yes, if women were taught to find amusement in domestic duties instead of seeking it at a circulating library, assemblies and balls, we should hear of fewer appeals to Doctor's Commons and the Court of King's Bench.

Sir W. Why that is undeniably true *(aside)* and now as we have a moment uninterrupted by family affairs—

Enter WILLIAM.

Lady W. Is the carriage come?

Will. No, my lady.

Lady W. Have you carried the books?

Will. No, my lady.

Lady W. Then go and hasten the coachman.

Will. No my lady—*yes* my lady.

Lady W. And William—send up Tiffany to Miss Helen's room, and bid her say we expect her at breakfast.

Will. Miss Helen has been in the Park these two hours.

Sir W. (*Laughs aside.*)

Lady W. How! in the Park these two hours? Impossible—send Tiffany to seek her.

Will. Yes, my lady. [*Exit.*

Sir W. So, as usual, risen with the lark, I suppose.

Lady W. Her disobedience will break my heart!

Sir W. Zounds, I shall go mad! here's a mother-in-law going to break her heart, because my daughter prefers a walk in the morning to writing culinary secrets into a fat folio family receipt-book!!

Lady W. Sir Willoughby, Sir Willoughby, it is you who encourage her in disregarding my orders.

Sir W. No such thing, Lady Worrett, no such thing! but if the girl likes to bring home a pair of ruddy cheeks from a morning walk, I don't see why she is to be balked of her fancy.

Lady W. Ruddy cheeks indeed! such robust health is becoming only in dairy-maids.

Sir W. Yes, I know your taste to a T; a consumption is always a key to your tender heart—and an interesting pallid countenance will at any time unlock the door to your best affections—but I must be excused if I prefer seeing my daughter with the rosy glow of health upon her cheek, rather than the sickly imitations of art, which bloom on the surface alone, while the fruit withers and decays beneath—but zounds, dont speak so loud—here's somebody coming, and they'll think

we are quarelling. *(Helen sings behind)* So here comes our madcap.

(Enter HELEN.)

Helen. Good morning—good morning. Here papa, look what a beautiful posy of wild flowers I have gathered—See! the dew is still upon them—how lovely they are!—to my fancy now, these uncultivated productions of nature have more charms than the whole garden can equal—why can we not all be like these flowers, simple and inartificial, with the stamp of nature and truth upon us?

Lady W. Romantic stuff,—but how comes it, Miss Helen, that my orders are thus disobeyed?

Helen. Why lord, mamma, I'll tell you how it was—but first I must eat my breakfast—so I'll sit down and tell you all about it. *(sits down.)* In the first place I rose at six—and remembering I was to copy out the whole catalogue of sweetmeats, and as I hate all sweet things (some suggar, if you please, papa) I determined to take one run round the park before I sat down to my morning's work—so taking a crust of bread and a glass of cold water, which I love better than (some tea if you please mamma) any thing in the world!—out I flew like a lapwing—stop'd at the Dairy, and (some cream if you please, papa) down to the meadows and gathered my nosegay, and then bounded home, with a heart full of gaiety, and a rare appetite—for—some roll and butter, if you please, mamma.

Lady W. Daughter, this levity of character is unbecoming your sex, and even your age—you see none of this offensive flightiness in me—

Sir W. Come, come, my dear Lady Worrett, Helen's gaiety is natural—Helen, my love—I have

charming news for you—every thing is at last arranged between Lord Austencourt and me respecting your marriage.

Helen. Why now, if mamma-in-law had said this, I should have thought she meant to make me as grave as herself.

Lady W. In expectation that Helen will behave as becomes her in this most important affair of her life, I consent to pass over her negligence this morning in regard to my favorite receipts.

Helen. I hate all receipts—sweet, bitter, and, sour.

Lady W. Then we will now talk of a husband.

Helen. I hate all husbands—sweet, bitter, and sour.

Sir W. Whoo! Helen my love, you should not contradict your mamma.

Helen. My dear papa—I don't contradict her; but I will not marry Lord Austencourt.

Lady W. This is too much for my weak nerves—I leave you, Sir Willoughby to arrange this affair, while I hasten to attend to my domestic duties.

Sir W. (aside to Lady W.) That's right—you'd better leave her to me—I'll manage her, I warrant—let me assist you—there—I'll soon settle this business. *(Hands Lady Worrett off.)*

Helen. Now, my dear papa, are you really of the same opinion as her ladyship?

Sir W. Exactly.

Helen. Ha! Ha! Lud! but that's comical—What—both think alike?

Sir W. Precisely!

Helen. That's very odd! I believe it's the first time you've agreed in opinion since you were made one! But I'm quite sure you never can wish me to marry a man I do not love.

Sir W. Why no—certainly not—but you *will* love him—indeed you *must*. It's my wife's wish you know, and so I wish it of course—Come, come, in this one trifling matter you must oblige us.

Helen. Well, as *you* think it only a trifling matter, and as *I* think it of importance enough to make me miserable, I'm sure *you'll* give up the point.

Sir W. Why no—you are mistaken—to be sure *I might* have given it up—but my Lady Worrett you know—but that's no matter—marriage is a duty, and 'tis incumbent on parents to see their children settled in that—*happy*—state.

Helen. Have *you* found that state *so happy*, Sir?

Sir W. Why—yes—that is—Hey? happy! certainly—doesn't every body say so? And what every body says *must* be true. However, that's not to the purpose—a connection with the family of Lord Austencourt is particularly desirable.

Helen. Not to *me*, I assure you, papa!

Sir W. Our estates join so charmingly to one another.

Helen. But sure, that's no reason *we* should be joined to one another!

Sir W. But their contiguity seems to invite a union by a marriage between you.

Helen. Then pray, papa, let the stewards marry the estates, and give me a separate maintenance.

Sir W. Helen, Helen! I see you are bent on disobedience to my Lady Worrett's wishes—Zounds! you don't see *me* disobedient to her wishes—but I know whereabouts your objection lies;—that giddy, dissipated, young fellow, his cousin Charles, the son of Sir Rowland Austencourt, has filled your head with nonsensical notions and chimeras of happiness—thank heaven, however, he's far enough off at sea.

Helen. And *I* think, Sir, that because a man is fighting our battles abroad, he ought not to be the less dear to those whom his courage enables to live in tranquillity at home.

Sir W. That's very true—*(aside)* but I have an unanswerable objection to all you can say. Lord Austencourt is rich, and Charles is a beggar! besides, Sir Rowland himself prefers Lord Austencourt.

Helen. More shame for him—his partial feelings to his nephew, and unnatural disregard of his son, have long since made me hate him—in short—you are for *money*, and chuse Lord Austencourt—I am for *love*, and prefer his poor cousin.

Sir W. Then, once for all—(as my Lady Worrett must be obeyed)—I no longer consult you on the subject, and it only remains for you to retain the affection of an indulgent father by complying with my will—(I mean my wife's) or to abandon my protection. [*Exit.*

Helen. I won't marry him, papa, I won't—nor I won't cry, tho' I've a great mind—A plague of all money, say I. Oh! what a grievous misfortune it is to be born with 12,000l. a year! but if I can't marry the man I like, I won't marry at all, that's determined; and every body knows the firmness of a woman's resolution,—when she resolves on contradiction. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *O'Dedimus's Office.*

Boxes round the shelves—O'DEDIMUS *discovered writing at an office table—a few papers and parchments, &c.*

O'Dedimus. There!' I think I've expressed my meaning quite plainly—(*reads*) "Farmer Flail "—I'm instructed by Lord Austencourt, your "landlord, to inform you, by word of letter, that "if you can't afford to pay the additional rent for "your farm, you must turn out." (I think that's clear enough) "As to your putting in the plea of "a large family, we cannot allow that as a set off; "because, when a man can't afford to support seven "children with decency, he ought not to trouble "himself to get them."—I think that's plain English—

"Your humble servant,
"CORNELIUS O'DEDIMUS,
"Attorney at Law."

"P. S. You may show this letter to his lord-"ship, to convince him I have done my duty; but "as I don't mean one word of it, if you'll come to "me privately I'll see what can be done for you "without his knowing any thing of the matter,"—and I think *that's* plain English.

Enter GAMEKEEPER *with a* COUNTRYMAN *in custody.*

O'Ded. Well, friend, and what are you?

Countryman. I be's a poacher! So my lord's gamekeeper here do say.

O'Ded. A poacher! Faith that's honest!

Gamekeeper. I caught him before day-light on the manor. I took away his gun, and shot his dog.

O'Ded. That was bravely done! So you must pamper your long stomach with pheasants and partridges, and be damn'd to ye! Will you prefer paying five pounds now, or three months hard labour in the house of correction?

Countrym. Thank ye, Sir,—I don't prefer either, Sir.

O'Ded. You must go before the justice—he'll exhort you, and commit ye!

Countrym. Ees, I do know that *extortion* and *commission*, and such like, be the office of the justice; but I'll have a bit of law, please punch!—He ha' kill'd my poor dog that I lov'd like one o'my own children, and I've gotten six of 'em, Lord bless 'em.

O'Ded. Six dogs!

Countrym. Dogs! No! children, mun.

O'Ded. Six children! Och, the fruitful sinner!

Countrym. My wife be a pain's-taking woman, Sir!—We ha' had this poor dear dog from a puppy.

O'Ded. Shut your ugly mouth, you babbler—Six children!—Oh! we must make an example of this fellow—an't I the village lawyer? and an't I the terror of all the rogues in the parish? (*aside to him.*) You must plead "not guilty."

Countrym. But I tell you, if that be guilt, I *be* guilty.

O'Ded. Why, you blundering booby, if you plead guilty, how will I ever be able to prove you innocent.

Countrym. Guilty or innocent, I'll have the law of him, by gum!—he has shot my poor old mongrel, and taken away my musket; and I've lost my day's drilling, and I'll make him pay for it.

O'Ded. A mongrel, and a musket! by St. Patrick, Mr. Gamekeeper, and you have nately set your foot in it!

Gamekeeper. Why, Sir, its a bad affair, Sir—'twas so dark, I couldn't see; and when I disco-

vered my mistake, I offered him a shilling to make it up, and he refused it!

O'Ded. (aside to Gamekeeper.) Harkye, Mr. Gamekeeper; he has one action against ye for his dog, and another for false imprisonment (*aloud*). I love to see the laws enforced with justice.—*(Aside)* but I'll always help a poor man to stand up against oppression—*(To Gamekeeper)* He has got you on the hip, and so go out and settle it between yourselves, and do *you* take care of yourself: *(to Countryman)* and do *you* make the best of your bargain. [*Exeunt.*

PARISH OFFICER *brings forward the* SAILOR.

Officer. Here's a vagrant—I found him begging without a pass.

O'Ded. Take him before his worship directly—the sturdy rogue ought to be punished.

Sailor. Please your honor, I'm a sailor.

O'Ded. And if you're a sailor, a'nt you ashamed to own it—a begging sailor is a disgrace to an honorable profession, for which the country has provided an asylum as glorious as it is deserved!

Sailor. Why so it has—but I an't bound for Greenwich yet!

O'Ded. (*aside to him.*) Why you're disabled I see!

Sailor. Disabled! what for? why I've only lost *one* arm yet—bless ye I'm no beggar. I was going to see my Nancy thirty miles further on the road, and meeting some old messmates, we had a cann o'grog together; one cann brought on another, and then we got drinking the King's health, and the Navy, and then *this* Admiral, and then *t'other* Admiral, 'till at last we had so many gallant heroes to drink, that we were all drunk afore we came to the reck'ning. So your honor, as my messmates had none o'the rhino, I paid all; and then you

know they had a long journey upwards, and no biscuit aboard: so I lent one a little, and another a little, 'till at last I found I had no coin left in my locker for myself, except a cracked teaster that Nancy gave me;—and I couldn't spend that you know, tho' I had been starving!

O'Ded. And so you begg'd?

Sailor. Begg'd, no! I just axed for a bit of bread and a mug o'water. That's no more than one Christian ought to give another, and if you call that begging, why I beg to differ in opinion.

O'Ded. According to the act, you are a vagrant, and the justice may commit ye; *(aside to the officer)*—lookye, Mr. Officer—you're in the wrong box here. Can't you see plain enough, by his having lost an arm, that he earns a livelihood by the work of his hands—so lest he should be riotous for being detained, let me advise you to be off. I'll send him off after you with a flea in his ear—the other way.

Officer. Thank ye Sir—thank ye—I'm much obliged to you for your advice, Sir, and shall take it, and so my service to you. [*Exit.*

O'Ded. Take this my honest lad, (*gives money*), say nothing about it, and give my service to Nancy.

Sailor. Why now, heaven bless your honor for ever; and if ever you're in distress, and I'm within sight of signals, why hang out your blue lights; and if I don't bear down to your assistance, may my gun be primed with damp powder the first time we fire a broadside at an enemy. [*Exit.*

O'Ded. rings a bell.

O'Ded. Ponder!—Now will this fellow be thinking and thinking till he quite forgets what he's doing—Ponder, I say—(*Enter Ponder.*) Here Ponder, take this letter to Farmer Flail's, and if you see Mrs. Muddle, his neighbour, give my love and duty to her.

Ponder. Yes, yes, Sir—but at that moment, Sir, I was immers'd in thought, if I may be allow'd the expression—I was thinking of the vast difference between *love* and *law*, and yet how neatly you've spliced them together in your last instructions to your humble servant, Peter Ponder—Clerk!—Umph!

O'Ded. Umph! is that your manners you bear-garden? Will I never be able to larn you to behave yourself? Study *me*, and talk like a gentleman, and be damn'd to ye.

Ponder. I study the law—I can't talk it!

O'Ded. Can't you? Then you'll never do—If your tongue don't run faster than your client's, how will you ever be able to bother him you booby?

Ponder. I'll draw out his case—he shall read, and he'll bother *himself!*

O'Ded. You've a notion—mind my instructions and I don't despair of seeing you at the bar one day—was that copy of a writ sarved yesterday upon Garble, the tailor?

Ponder. Aye.

O'Ded. And sarve him right too—that's a big rogue that runs in debt wid his eyes open, and tho' he has property, refuses to pay—Is he safe?

Ponder. He was bailed by Swash, the brewer.

O'Ded. And was the other sarved on Shuttle, the weaver—

Ponder. Aye.

O'Ded. Who bailed him?

Ponder. Nobody, he's gone to jail.

O'Ded. Gone to jail! Why *his* poverty is owing to misfortune—he *can't* pay—well that's not our affair—the law must have it's course.

Ponder. So Shuttle said to his wife, as she hung crying on his shoulder.

O'Ded. That's it, he's a sensible man—and that's more than his wife is—we've nothing to do with women's tears.

Ponder. Not a bit—so they walked him off to jail in a jiffey, if I may be allowed the expression.

O'Ded. To be sure, and that was right—they did their duty—tho' for sartin if a poor man can't pay his debts when he's at liberty, he won't be much nearer the mark when he's shut up in idleness in a prison.

Ponder. No.

O'Ded. And when he that sent them there comes to make up his last account, 'tis my belief that he won't be able to shew cause why a bill shouldn't be filed against him for barbarity!—Are the writings all ready for Sir Rowland?

Ponder. All ready—shall I go now to Farmer Flail's with the letter?

O'Ded. Aye, and if you see Shuttle's wife in your way, give my service to her, and d'ye hear—as you're a small talker, don't let the little you say be so cursed crabbed; and if a few kind words of comfort should find their way from your heart to your tongue, don't shut your ugly mouth and keep them within your teeth: you may tell her that if she can find any body to stand up for her husband, I sha'nt be over-nice about the sufficiency of the bail—get you gone.

Ponder. I shall—Let me see! Farmer Flail!—Mrs. Muddle, his neighbour!—Shuttle's wife! and a whole string of messages and memorandums—here's business enough to bother the brains of any ordinary man!—you are pleased to say, Sir, that I am too much addicted to thinking—I think *not*.

[*Exit Ponder.*

O'Ded. By my soul if an attorney wasn't sometimes a bit of a rogue, he'd never be able to earn an honest livelihood—Oh Mr. O'Dedimus! why have you so little, when your heart could distribute so much?

(Sir Rowland, without.)

Sir Row. Mr. O'Dedimus—within there!

O'Ded. Yes! I'm within there.

(Enter Sir Rowland.)

Sir Row. Where are these papers?—I thought the law's delay was only felt by those who could not pay for its expedition.

O'Ded. The law, Sir Rowland, is a good horse, and his pace is slow and sure, but he goes no faster because you goad him with a golden spur; but every thing is prepared, Sir—and now, Sir Rowland, I have an ugly sort of an awkward affair to mention to you—

Sir Row. Does it concern *me?*

O'Ded. You know, Sir Rowland, at the death of my worthy friend, the late Lord Austencourt, you were left sole executor and guardian to his son, the present Lord, then an infant of three years of age.

Sir Row. What does this lead to? *(starting.)*

O'Ded. With a disinterested view to benefit the estate of the minor, who came of age the other day, you some time ago embarked a capital of 14,000l. in a great undertaking.

Sir Row. Proceed.

O'Ded. I have this morning received a letter from the agent, stating the whole concern to have failed—the partners to be bankrupts—and the property consigned to assignees not to promise, as a

final dividend, more than one shilling in the pound—this letter will explain the rest.

Sir Row. How! I was not prepared for this—What's to be done?

O'Ded. When one loses a sum of money that isn't one's own, there's but one thing to be done.

Sir Row. And what is that?

O'Ded. To pay it back again!—

Sir Row. You know that to be impossible—utterly impossible.

O'Ded. Then, Sir Rowland, take the word of *Cornelius O'Dedimus*, attorney at law, his lordship will rigidly exact the money to the uttermost farthing.

Sir Row. You are fond, Sir, of throwing out these hints to his disadvantage.

O'Ded. I am bold to speak it—I am possessed of a secret, Sir Rowland, in regard to his lordship.

Sir Row. (Alarmed.) What is it you mean?

O'Ded. I thought I told you it was a *secret*.

Sir Row. But to me you should have no secrets that regard my family.

O'Ded. With submission, Sir Rowland, his lordship is my client, as well as yourself, and I have learned from the practice of the courts, that an attorney who blabs in his business, has soon no suit to his back.

Sir R. But this affair perhaps involves my deepest interest—my character—my all is at stake.

O'Ded. Have done wid your pumping now—d'ye think I am a basket full of cinders, that I'm to be sifted after this fashion?

Sir R. Answer but this—does it relate to Charles—my son?

O'Ded. Sartinly, the young gentleman has a small bit of interest in the question.

Sir R. One thing more. Does it allude to a

transaction which happened some years ago—am I a principal concerned in it?

O'Ded. Devil a ha'porth—it happened only six months past.

Sir R. Enough—I breathe again.

O'Ded. I'm glad of that, for may-be you'll now let me breathe to tell ye that as I know Lord Austencourt's private character better than you do—my life to a bundle of parchment, he'll even arrest ye for the money.

Sir R. Impossible, he cannot be such a villain!

Abel Growse. (without) What ho! is the lawyer within?

Sir R. Who interrupts us?

O'Ded. 'Tis the strange man that lives on the common—his name is Abel Growse—he's coming up.

Sir. R. I'll wait till you dismiss him, for I cannot encounter any one at present—misfortunes crowd upon me—And one act of guilt has drawn the vengeance of heaven on my head, and will pursue me to the grave. [*Exit to an inner room.*

O'Ded. Och, if a small gale of adversity blows up such a storm as this, we shall have a pretty hurricane by-and-by when you larn a little more of your hopeful nephew, and see his new matrimonial scheme fall to the ground like butter-milk through a sieve.

Enter Abel Growse.

Ab. Growse. Now, Sir—You are jackall, as I take it, to Lord Austencourt.

O'Ded. I am his man of business, sure enough; but didn't hear before of my promotion to the office you mention.

Ab. Gr. You are possessed of all his secret deeds.

O'Ded. That's a small mistake—I have but one of them, and that's the deed of settlement on Miss Helen Worrett, spinster.

Ab. Gr. Leave your quibbling, Sir, and speak plump to the point—if habit hasn't hardened your heart, and given a system to your knavery, answer me this—Lord Austencourt has privately married my daughter?

O'Ded. Hush!

Ab. Gr. You were a witness.

O'Ded. Has any body told you that thing?

Ab. Gr. Will you deny it?

O'Ded. Will you take a friend's advice?

Ab. Gr. I didn't come for advice. I came to know if you will confess the fact, or whether you are villain enough to conceal it.

O'Ded. Have done wid your bawling—Sir Rowland's in the next room!

Ab. Gr. Is he? then Sir Rowland shall hear me —Sir Rowland!—he shall see my daughter righted —Ho there! Sir Rowland!

O'Ded. (*Aside*) Here'll be a divil of a dust kicked up presently about the ears of Mr. Cornelius O'Dedimus, attorney at law!!

Enter Sir Rowland.

Sir R. Who calls me?

Ab. Gr. 'Twas I!

Sir R. What is it you want, friend?

Ab. Gr. Justice.

Sir R. Justice! then you had better apply there. (*pointing to O'Dedimus.*)

Ab. Gr. That's a mistake—he deals only in *Law*, 'tis to you that I appeal—your nephew, Lord Austencourt, is about to marry the daughter of Sir Willoughby Worrett.

Sir R. He is.

Ab. Gr. Never! I will save him the guilt of that crime at least!

Sir R. You are mysterious, Sir.

Ab. Gr. Perhaps I am. Briefly—your nephew is privately married to my daughter—this man was present at their union—will you see justice done me, and make him honorably proclaim his wife.

Sir R. Your tale is incredible, Sir—It is sufficient however to demand attention, and I warn you lest by your folly you rouse an indignation that may crush you.

Ab. Gr. Hear me proud man, while I warn *you!* my daughter is the lawful wife of lord Austencourt —double is the woe to me that she *is* his wife— but as it is so, he shall publicly acknowledge her—to you I look for justice and redress—see to it, Sir, or I shall speedily appear in a new character, with my wrongs in my hand, to hurl destruction on you! *(Exit.)*

Sir R. What does the fellow mean?

O'Ded. That's just what I'm thinking—

Sir. R. You, he said, were privy to their marriage.

O'Ded. Bless ye, the man's mad!

Sir R. Ha! you said you had a secret respecting my nephew.

O'Ded. Sir, if you go on so, you'll bother me!

Sir R. The fellow must be silenced—can you not contrive some means to rid us of his insolence?

O'Ded. Sir, I shall do my duty, as my duty should be done, by Cornelius O'Dedimus, attorney at law.

Sir R. My nephew must not hear of this accursed loss—be secret on that head, I charge you!

But in regard to this man's bold assertion, I must consult him instantly—haste and follow me to his house.

O'Ded. Take me wid ye, Sir; for this is such a dirty business, that I'll never be able to go through it unless you shew me the way. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Library at Sir* Willoughby's.

Enter Helen *with* Servant.

Helen. LORD Austencourt—true—this is his hour for persecuting me—very well, desire Lord Austencourt to come in. (*Exit Servant.* I won't marry. They all say I shall. Some girls now would sit down and sigh, and moan, as if that would mend the matter—that will never suit me? Some indeed would run away with the man they liked better—but then the only man I ever liked well enough to marry—is—I believe, run away from *me.* Well! that won't do!—so I'll e'en laugh it off as well as I can; and tho' I won't marry his Lordship, I'll tease him as heartily as if I had been his wife these twenty years.

Enter Lord Austencourt.

Lord A. Helen! too lovely Helen! once more behold before you to supplicate for your love and pity, the man whom the world calls proud, but whom your beauty alone has humbled.

Helen. They say, my Lord, that pride always has a fall some time or other.—I hope the fall of your Lordship's hasn't hurt you.

Lord A. Is it possible that the amiable Helen, so famed for gentleness and goodness, can see the victim of her charms thus dejected stand before her.

Helen. Certainly not, my Lord—so pray sit down.

Lord A. Will you never be for one moment serious?

Helen. Oh, yes, my Lord—I am never otherwise when *I think* of your Lordship's proposals—but when you are making love and fine speeches to me in person, 'tis with amazing difficulty I can help laughing.

Lord A. Insolent vixen, *(aside)* I had indulged a hope, madam, that the generosity and disinterested love I have evinced—

Helen. Why as to your Lordship's generosity in condescending to marry a poor solitary spinster, I am certainly most duly grateful—and no one can possibly doubt your disinterestedness, who knows I am only heiress to 12,000l. a year—a fortune which, as I take it, nearly doubles the whole of your Lordship's rent roll!

Lord A. Really, madam, if I am suspected of any mercenary motives, the liberal settlements which are now ready for your perusal, must immediately remove any such suspicion.

Helen. Oh, my Lord, you certainly mistake me —only as my papa observes, our estates *do join so charmingly to one another!*

Lord A. Yes:—that circumstance is certainly advantageous to both parties. (*exultingly.*)

Helen. Certainly!—only, as mine is the bigest, perhaps your's would be the greatest gainer by the bargain.

Lord A. My dear Madam, a title and the advantages of elevation in rank amply compensate the sacrifice on your part.

Helen. Why, as to a title, my lord (as Mr. O'Dedimus, your attorney observes), there's no title in my mind better than a good title to a fine estate —and I see plainly, that altho' your lordship is a

peer of the realm—you think this title of mine no mean companion for your own.

Lord A. Nay, Madam—Believe me—I protest—I assure you—solemnly, that those considerations have very little—indeed *no* influence *at all* with me.

Helen. Oh, no!—only it is natural that you should feel (as papa again observes) that the *contiguity* of these estates seems to *invite* a union by a marriage between us.

Lord A. And if you admit that fact—why do you decline the invitation?

Helen. Why, one doesn't accept *every* invitation that's offered, you know—one sometimes has very disagreeable ones; and then one presents compliments, and is extremely sorry that a prior engagement obliges us to decline the honour.

Lord A. (*aside*) Confound the satirical hussey—But should not the wishes of your parents have some weight in the scale?

Helen. Why, so they have; *their* wishes are in one scale, and *mine* are in the other; do all I can, I can't make mine weigh most, and so the beam remains balanced.

Lord A. I should be sorry to make theirs preponderate, by calling in their authority as auxiliaries to their wishes.

Helen. Authority!—Ho! what, you think to marry me by force! do ye my Lord?

Lord A. *They* are resolute—and if *you* continue obstinate—

Helen. I dare say your lordship's education hasn't precluded your knowledge of a very true, tho' *rather* vulgar proverb—"one man may lead a horse to the water, but twenty can't make him drink."

Lord A. The allusion may be classical, Madam,

tho' certainly it is not very elegant—nor has it even the advantage of being applicable to the point in question. However, I do not despair to see this resolution changed. In the mean time, I did not think it in your nature to treat any man who loves you with cruelty and scorn.

Helen. Then, why don't you desist, my lord? If you'd take an answer, you had a civil one; but if you will follow and teaze one, like a sturdy beggar in the street, you must expect at last a reproof for your impertinence.

Lord A. Yet even in their case perseverance often obtains what was denied to poverty.

Helen. Yes, possibly, from the feeble or the vain—But genuine Charity, and her sister, Love, act only from their own generous impulse, and scorn intimidation.

Enter TIFFANY.

Tiffany. Are you alone, Madam?

Helen. No; I was only wishing to be so.

Tiff. A young woman is without enquiring for Sir Willoughby, Ma'am; I thought he had been here.

Helen. Do you know her?

Tiff. Yes, Ma'am; 'tis Fanny, the daughter of the odd man that lives on the common.

Helen. I'll see her myself—desire her to walk up. [*Exit Tiffany.*

Lord A. (*seems uneasy*) Indeed! what brings her here?

Helen. Why, what can be the matter now? your Lordship seems quite melancholy on a sudden.

Lord A. I, madam! oh no!—or if I am—'tis merely a head ache—or some such cause—or perhaps owing to the influence of the weather.

Helen. Your Lordship is a very susceptible ba-

rometer—when you entered this room your countenance was *set fair*—but now I see the index points to *stormy*.

Lord A. Madam, you have company, or business—a good morning to you.

Helen. Stay, stay, my Lord.

Lord A. Excuse me at present, I have an important affair—another time.

Helen. Surely, my Lord, the arrival of this innocent girl does not drive you away?

Lord A. Bless me, madam, what an idea! certainly not—but I have just recollected an engagement of consequence—some other time—Madam, your most obedient— [*Exit.*

Enter FANNY.

Fan. I beg pardon, madam, I'm fearful I intrude—but I enquired for Sir Willougby, and they shewed me to this room—I wished to speak with him on *particular* business—your servant, madam.

Hel. Pray stay, my good girl—I rejoice in this opportunity of becoming acquainted with you—the character I have heard of you has excited an affectionate interest—you must allow me to become your friend.

Fanny. Indeed, indeed, madam, I am in want of friends—but you can never be one of them.

Helen. No! Why so?

Fanny. You, madam! Oh no—you are the only enemy I ever had.

Helen. Enemy!—This is very extraordinary! I have scarce ever seen you before—Assuredly I never injured you.

Fanny. Heaven forbid I should wish any one to injure you as deeply.

Hel. I cannot understand you—pray explain yourself.

Fan. That's impossible, madam—my Lord would never forgive me.

Hel. Your Lord! Let me entreat you to explain your meaning.

Fan. I cannot, Madam; I came hither on business of importance, and no trifling business should have brought me to a house inhabited by one who is the cause of all my wretchedness.

Hel. This is a most extraordinary affair! There is a mixture of cultivation and simplicity in your manner that affects me strongly—I see, my poor girl, you are distressed; and though what you have said leaves on my mind a painful suspicion—

Fan. Oh heavens, Madam! stay, I beseech you! —I am not what you think me, indeed I am not— I must not, for a moment, let you think of me so injuriously—Yet I have promised secrecy!—but sure no promise can be binding, when to keep it we must sacrifice all that is valuable in life—Hear me then Madam—The struggle is violent, but I owe it to myself to acknowledge all.

Hel. No, no, my dear girl! I now see what it would cost you to reveal your secret, and I will not listen to it—rest assured, I have no longer a thought to your disadvantage: Curiosity gives place to interest, for tho' 'tis cruelty to inflict a wound, 'tis still more deliberate barbarity to probe when we cannot hope to heal it. (*going*).

Fanny. Stay, madam, stay—your generosity overpowers me! oh madam!—you know not how wretched I am.

Helen. What is it affects you thus?—come, if your story is of a nature that may be revealed, you are sure of sympathy.

Fanny. I never should have doubted; but my father has alarmed me sadly—he says my Lord

Austencourt is certainly on the point of marriage with you.

Helen. And how, my dear girl, if it were so, could that affect you—come, you must be explicit.

Fanny. Affect me! merciful heaven! can I see him wed another? He is my husband by every tie sacred and human.

Helen. Suffering, but too credulous girl! have you then trusted to his vows?

Fanny. How madam! was I to blame—loving as I did—to trust in vows so solemn: could I suppose he would dare to break them, because our marriage was performed in secret!

Helen. Your marriage child! good heavens, you amaze me! but here we may be interrupted—this way with me—If this indeed be so, all may be well again; for tho' he may be dead to *feeling* be assured he is alive to *fear:* the man who once descends to be a villain is generally observed to be, at heart, a coward. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The door of a Country Inn.*

PONDER *sitting on a Portmanteau.*

Ponder. I've heard that intense thinking has driven some philosopher's mad!—now if this should happen to *me,* 'twill never be the fate of my young patron, Mr. Charles Austencourt, whom I have suddenly met on his sudden return from sea, and who never thinks at all—Poor gentleman, he little thinks what———

Enter CHARLES AUSTENCOURT.

Charles. Not gone yet? How comes it you are not on the road to my father? Is the fellow deaf or dumb. Ponder! are ye asleep?

Ponder. I'm thinking, whether I am or not.

Charles. And what wise scheme now occupies your thoughts?

Ponder. Sir, I confess the subject is beneath me. (*pointing to the portmanteau.*)

Charles. The weight of the portmanteau, I suppose, alarms you.

Ponder. If that was my heaviest misfortune, Sir, I could carry double with all my heart—No, Sir—I was thinking that as your father, Sir Rowland, sent you on a cruise for some cause best known to himself; and as you have thought proper to return for some cause best known to *yourself*, the chances of war (if I may be allowed the expression) are, that the contents of that trunk will be your only inheritance—or in other words, that your father will cut you off with a shilling—and now I'm thinking—

Charles. No doubt—thinking takes up so many of your waking hours, that you seldom find time for *doing*. And so you have since my departure turned your thinking faculties to the law.

Ponder. Yes, Sir; when you gave me notice to quit, I found it so hard to live honestly, that lest the law should take to me, I took to the law; and so articled myself to Mr. O'Dedimus, the attorney in our town: but there is a thought unconnected with law that has occupied my head every moment since we met.

Charles. Pr'ythee dismiss your thoughts, and get your legs in motion.

Ponder. Then, Sir, I have really been thinking,

ever since I saw you, that you are a little—*(going off to a distance)* a little *odd* hereabouts, Sir? *(pointing to his head)* a little damned mad, if I may be allowed the expression!

Charles. Ha! ha! very probably! my sudden return, without a motive, as you suppose, has put that wise notion in your head.

Ponder. Without a motive! No, Sir, I believe I know tolerably well the motive. The old story, Sir—Ha!—Love!

Charles. Love? And pray, sirrah, how do you dare to presume to suppose, that I—that I can be guilty of such a folly—I should be glad to know how you dare venture to think that I - - -

Ponder. Lord bless you, Sir, I discovered it before you left the country.

Charles. Indeed! and by what symptoms, pray?

Ponder. The old symptoms, Sir—In the first place, frequent fits of my complaint.

Charles. Your complaint!

Ponder. Yes—thinking!—long reveries—sudden starts—sentimental sighs—fits of unobserving absence—fidgets and fevers—orders and counter-orders—loss of memory—loss of appetite—loss of rest, and loss of your senses, if I may be allowed the expression.

Charles. No, Sir—you may not be allowed the expression—'tis impertinent, 'tis false.—I never was unobserving or absent—I never had the fidgets—I never once mentioned the name of my adored Helen;—and, heigho! I never sighed for her in my life!

Ponder. Nor I, Sir; tho' I've been married these three years, I never once sighed for my dear wife in all that time—heigho!

Charles. I mustn't be angry with the fellow.—

Why, I took you for an unobserving blockhead, or I would never have trusted you so near me.

Ponder. Then, Sir, you *mis*-took me—I fancy it was in one of your most decided unobserving fits that you took *me* for a blockhead.

Charles. Well, Sir—I see you have discovered my secret; act wisely, and it may be of service to you.

Ponder. Sir—I haven't studied the law for nothing. I'm no fool, if I may be allowed the expression.

Charles. I begin to suspect you have penetration enough to be useful to me.

Ponder. And craving your pardon, Sir, I begin to suspect your want of that faculty, from your not having found out that before.

Charles. I will now trust you, although once my servant, with the state of my heart.

Ponder. Sir, that's very kind of you to trust your humble servant with a *secret* he had himself discovered ten months ago.

Charles. Keep it with honour and prudence.

Ponder. Sir, I *have* kept it—nobody knows of it that I know of, except a few of your friends—many of your enemies—most travelling strangers, and all your neighbours.

Charles. Why, Zounds!—you don't mean to say that any body, except yourself, suspects me to be in love.

Ponder. Suspects! no Sir!—*Suspicion* is out of the question; it is taken as a proved fact in all society—a bill found by every grand jury in the county.

Charles.—The devil it is!—Zounds!—I shall never be able to shew my face—this will never do—my boasted disdain of ever bowing to the power of love—How ridiculous will it now render me—

While the mystery and sacred secrecy of this attachment constituted the chief delight it gave to the refinement of my feelings—O! I'll off to sea again!—I won't stay here—Order a post-chaise—No—Yes—A chaise-and-four—d'ye hear?

Ponder. Yes, Sir—but I'm thinking—

Charles. What?

Ponder. That it is possible you may alter your mind.

Charles. No such thing, Sir—I'll set off this moment—order the chaise, I say—

Ponder. Think of it again, Sir.

Charles. Will you obey my orders, or not?

Ponder. I think I will. (*aside.*) Poor gentleman—now could I blow him up into a blaze in a minute, by telling him that his mistress is just on the point of marriage with his cousin, but tho' they say "ill news travels apace," they shall never say that I rode postillion on the occasion. [*Exit into Inn.*

Charles. Here's a discovery!—all my delicate management destroy'd—known all over the country—I'm off! and yet to have travelled so far, and not to have one glympse of her! but then to be pointed at as a poor devil in love—a silly inconsistent boaster—no, that won't do—but then I may see her—yes—I'll see her once—just once—for three minutes—or three minutes and a half at most—no longer, positively—Ponder, Ponder! (*Enter Ponder.*) Ponder, I say—

Ponder. I wish you wou'dn't interrupt me, for I'm thinking—

Charles. Damn your thinking, Sir.

Ponder. I was only thinking that you may have alter'd your mind already.

Charles. I have not alter'd my mind. But since I *am* here, I should be wanting in duty not to

pay my respects to my father; so march on with the trunk Sir.

Ponder. Yes Sir—but if that's all you want to do Sir, you may spare yourself the trouble of going further, for most fortunately here he comes, and your noble cousin Lord Austencourt with him——

Charles. The Devil!—

Ponder. Yes Sir—the Devil—and his uncle, your father, if I may be allowed the expression. *(Exit.*

Enter Sir ROWLAND *and Lord* AUSTENCOURT.

Charles. My dear father, I am heartily glad to see you—

Sir R. How is this—Charles! Returned thus unexpectedly?

Charles. Unexpected pleasure they say Sir, is always most welcome—I hope you find it so.

Sir R. This conduct youngster, requires explanation.

Charles. Sir, I have it ready at my tongue's end. My Lord, I ask your pardon—I'm glad to see you too—

Lord A. I wish, Sir, I could return the compliment; but this extraordinary conduct—

Charles. No apologies my Lord, for your civil speech—you might easily have returned the compliment in the same words, and, believe me, with as much sincerity as it was offered.

Sir R. This is no time for dissention, Sir—

Lord A. My cousin forgets, Sir Rowland, that altho' united by ties of consanguinity, *birth* and *fortune* have placed me in a station which commands some respect,

Charles. No my Lord, for I also am in a station where I *too* command respect—where I respect and am respected. I therefore well know what is due to my superiors; and this duty I never forget, till

those above me forget what they owe to themselves.

Lord A. I am not aware, good cousin, that I have ever yet forfeited my title to the respect I claim.

Charles. You have, my lord; for high rank forfeits every claim to distinction when it exacts submissive humility from those beneath it, while at the same time it refuses a graceful condescension in exchange.

Sir R. Charles, Charles, these sentiments but ill become the dependant state in which fortune has placed you.

Charles. Dependant state! Dependant upon whom?—What, on *him*—my titled, tawdry cousin there? What are his pretensions that he shall presume to brand me as a poor dependant?—What are *his* claims to independence?—How does he spend the income fortune has allotted to him? Does he rejoice to revive in the mansion of his ancestors the spirit of old English hospitality—do the eyes of aged tenants twinkle with joy when they hope his coming—do the poor bless his arrival?—I say no—He is the lord of land—and is also, what he seems still more proud of, a lord of parliament—but I will front him in both capacities, and frankly tell him, that in the first he is a burthen to his own estate, and not a benefactor—and in the second, a peer, but not a prop.

Sir R. Charles, how dare you thus persevere—You cannot deny, rash and foolish boy, that you are in a dependant state—Your very profession proves it.

Charles. O, Father, spare that insult—the profession I glory to belong to, is above dependence—Yes! while we live and fight, we feel, and grate-

fully acknowledge, that our pay depends on our king and country, and therefore you *may* style us dependent—but, in the hour of battle, we wish for nothing more than to show that the glory and safety of the nation *depends on us*—and by our death or blood to repay all previous obligation.

Sir R. Dismiss this subject.

Charles. With all my heart—My cousin was the subject, and he's a fatiguing one.

Sir R. Tho' you do not love your cousin, you ought to pay that deference to his rank, which you refuse to his person.

Charles. Sir, I do—like a fine mansion in the hands of a bad inhabitant—I admire the building, but despise the tenant.

Lord A. This insolence is intolerable, and will not be forgotten!—You may find, hot Sir, that where my friendship is despised, my resentment may be feared. I well know the latent motives for this insult—it is the language of a losing gamester, and is treated with deserved contempt by a *successful rival.* [*Exit.*

Charles. Ha! a *successful rival!*—is this possible?

Sir R. It is—the treaty of marriage between Lord Austencourt and Helen is this morning concluded.

Charles. And does she consent?

Sir R. There can be little doubt of that.

Charles. But *little* doubt! False Helen!—— Come! Come! I know my Helen better.

Sir R. I repeat my words, Sir—It is not the curse of every parent to have a disobedient child.

Charles. By heaven, Sir, that reflection cuts me to the heart—you have ever found in me the obedience, nay more, the affection of a son, 'till

circumstance on circumstance convinced me, I no longer possessed the affection of a father.

Sir R. Charles—we are too warm—I feel that I have in some degree merited your severe reproof—give me your hand—and to convince you that you undervalue my feelings towards you, I will now confess that I have been employed during your absence, in planning an arrangement which will place you above the malice of fortune—you know our neighbour Mrs. Richland—

Charles. What the gay widow with a fat jointure? What of her?

Sir R. She will make not only a rich, but a good wife. I know she likes you—I'm sure of it.—

Charles. Likes *me?*—

Sir R. I am convinced she does.

Charles. But—what the devil—she doesn't mean to marry me surely—

Sir R. That will, I am convinced, depend upon yourself—

Charles. Will it?—then by the Lord, tho' I sincerely esteem her, I shall make my bow, and decline the honor at once. No, Sir—the heart is *my* aim, and all the gold I care for in the hand that gives it, is the modest ring that encompasses the finger, and marks that hand as mine for ever.

Sir R. Thus I see another of my prospects blighted! undutiful, degenerate boy! your folly and obstinacy will punish themselves—answer me not—think of the proposal I have made you!—obey your father's will, or for ever I renounce you! [*Exit.*

Charles. Whoo! here's a whirligig!—I've drifted on to a pleasant lee shore here! Helen betrothed to another!!—Impossible—Oh Helen! Helen!

Zounds! I'm going to make a soliloquy! this will never do—no—I'll see Helen—upbraid her falsehood—drop one tear to her memory—regain my frigate—seek the enemy—fight like a true sailor—die like a Briton, and leave my character and memory to my friends—and my blessing and forgiveness to Helen. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

O'Dedimus's Office.—Ponder discovered.

Ponder. SO! having executed my commission, let me *think* a little—(*sits down*) for certain I, and my master, are too precious rogues (*pauses.*) I wonder whether or not we shall be discovered, as assistants in this sham marriage (*pauses.*) If we *are*, we shall be either transported or hanged, I wonder which:—My lord's bribe, however, was convenient; and in all cases of *conscience versus convenience*, 'tis the general rule of practice to non-suit the plaintiff. Ha! who's here? The poor girl herself. (*Enter Fanny.*) I pity her; but I've been bribed; so I must be honest.

Fanny. Oh, Sir, I'm in sad distress—my father has discovered my intercourse with Lord Austencourt, and says, he is sure my Lord means to deny our marriage; but I have told him, as you and your master were present, I am sure you will both be ready to prove it, should my Lord act so basely.

Ponder. I must mind my hits here, or shall get myself into a confounded scrape — ready to do what, did you say, ma'am? to prove your marriage?

Fanny. Yes—as you both were present—

Ponder. Present! me! Lord bless me, what is it you mean? Marriage! prove! me! present!

Fanny. Why do you hesitate—come, come—you do but jest with me—you cannot have forgotten it—

Ponder. Hey? why no! but I can't say I remember it—

Fanny. Sure, sure, you cannot have the barbarity to deny that you were a witness to the ceremony!

Ponder. I may be mistaken—I've a remarkably short memory—but to the best of my recollection, I certainly—

Fanny. Aye—you recollect it—

Ponder. I certainly *never was* present——

Fanny. Cruel—you were—indeed, indeed you were.

Ponder. But at one wedding in my life.

Fanny. And that was mine—

Ponder. No, that was mine.

Fanny. Merciful heaven! I see my fate—it is disgrace and misery?

Ponder. Bless you, if I could remember it—but I can't—however I'll speak to my master about it, and if *he* recollects it, I dare say *I* shall.

Fanny. I have then no hope—and the fate of the hapless Fanny is decided.

Ponder. Ha! yonder I see comes my master and his lordship. I wonder what *they* are thinking of—they're coming this way—*I* think we had better retire.

Fanny. Oh hide me, hide me! in any corner let me hide my head, from scorn, from misery, and most of all, from him—

Ponder. You can't escape that way, so you must come this—they won't think of coming here. (*puts her into another room.*) Poor girl! I've a great mind to confess the whole affair. What shall I get by that? Nothing! nothing?! oh! that's contrary to law! [*Exit.*

Enter Lord AUSTENCOURT *and* O'DEDIMUS.

Lord A. Are you certain no one can overhear us?

O'Ded. There's nobody can hear us except my ould house-keeper, and she's as deaf as St. Dunstan's clock-strikers.

Lord A. There is no time to be lost. You must immediately repair to Fanny—tell her my affection is unabated—tell her I shall ever love her, and make her such pecuniary offers, as shall convince her of my esteem and affection; but we must meet no more. *(Fanny utters a cry behind.)*

O'Ded. What's that?

Lord A. We are betrayed!

O'Ded. Och! 'tis only my old housekeeper

Lord A. Your housekeeper! I thought you told me she was deaf.

O'Ded. Yes—but she isn't dumb—divil a word can she *hear* for sartain, but she's apt to *say* a great many, and so we may proceed.

Lord A. You will easily accomplish this business with Fanny.

O'Ded. I'm afraid not—to tell you the truth my lord, I don't like the job.

Lord A. Indeed—and why Sir?

O'Ded. Somehow, when I see a poor girl with her pretty little eyes brim full of tears, which I think have no business to be there, I'm more apt to be busy in wiping them away, than in saying cruel things that will make them flow faster—you had better tell her all this yourself, my lord.

Lord A. That Sir, is impossible—if *you* decline it, I shall find some one less delicate.

O'Ded. There's reason in that, and if you send another to her, he may not be quite so delicate, as you say; so I'll even undertake it myself.

Lord A. The poor girl disposed of—If the old fool her father, will be thus clamorous, we

must not be nice as to the means of silencing him —Money, I suppose, is his object.

O'Ded. May be not—If a rich man by accident disables a poor man from working, money may make him easy—but when his feelings are deliberately tortured, devil fly away with the mercenary miser, if he will take shining dirt as a compensation for cruelty.

Lord A. I can dispense with moral reflections—It may serve your purpose elsewhere, but to me, who know your practice, your preaching is ridiculous—What is it you propose? If the fellow won't be satisfied by money he must be removed.

O'Ded. Faith, 'tis a new way, sure enough, to make reparation to the feelings of a father, after having seduced his daughter under the plea of a false marriage—performed by a sham priest, and a forged licence!

Fanny. (*behind*) Oh, heaven! let me pass—I must and will see him—(*enters*) Oh, my lord! my lord! my husband!—(*she falls at his feet, he raises her*). Surely my ears deceived me—you cannot, cannot, mean it—a false marriage! a pretended priest!—What is to become of me? In mercy, kill me! —Let me not live to see my broken-hearted father expire with grief and shame, or live to curse me! —Spare me but this, my lord, and I will love—forgive—will pray for you—

Lord A. This is a plot against me—You placed her there on purpose to surprise me in the moment of unguarded weakness.

O'Ded. By St. Patrick, how she came there is a most mysterious mystery to Cornelius O'Dedimus, attorney at law.

Lord A. Fanny, I intreat you, leave me.

Fanny. Oh, do not send me from you! Can you, my lord, abandon thus to shame and wretch-

edness, the poor deluded victim of your treachery!

Lord A. Ha! leave me, I charge you!

Fanny. No, no, my dearest lord! I cannot leave you! Whither shall I fly, if these arms deny me refuge!—Am I not your's?—What if these wicked men refuse me justice! There is another witness who will rise in dreadful evidence against you! 'Tis heaven itself! 'Tis there your vows were heard! 'tis there, where truth resides, your vows are registered!—Then, oh! reflect before you plunge too deep in guilt for repentance and retreat—reflect, that we are married!

Lord A. I cannot speak at present—leave me, and we will meet again.

Fanny. Do not command me from you—I see your heart is softened by my tears——Cherish the stranger Pity, in your breast—'tis noble! excellent! Such pity, in itself, is virtue!—Oh, cherish it, my lord! nor let the selfish feelings of the world step in to smother it!—Now!—now, while it glows unstifled in your heart.—Now, ere it dies, to be revived no more—at once proclaim the triumph of your virtue, and receive into your arms a fond and an acknowledged wife!

Lord A. Ha! impossible—Urge me no more! I cannot—will not hear you—My heart has ever been your own—my *hand* MUST be another's—still we may love each other—still we may sometimes meet.

Fanny (*after a struggle*). I understand you. No, Sir! Since it must be, we will meet no more! I know that there are laws—but to these laws I disdain to fly!—Mine is an injury that cannot be redressed, for the only mortal witnesses to our union you have suborned—the laws therefore cannot do me justice, and I will never—inhuman as you are—I will never seek them for revenge. [*Exit.*

O'Ded. (*aside*) I'm thinking, that if I was a lord, I

should act in a clean *contrary* way—By the powers now, that man has got what I call a tough constitution—his heart's made of stone, like a brick-wall—Oh, that a man should have the power of a man, and not know how to behave like a man!

Lord A. What's to be done? speak—advise me!

O'Ded. That's it—have you made up your mind already, that you ask me to advise you?

Lord A. I know not how to act.

O'Ded. When a man's in doubt whether he should act as an honest man or a rogue, there are two or three small reasons for choosing the right side.

Lord A. What is't you mean, Sir—

O'Ded. I mean this thing—that as I suppose you're in doubt, whether to persecute the poor souls, or to marry the sweet girl in right earnest.

Lord A. Marry her! I have no such thoughts—idiot!—

O'Ded. Ideot! That's no proof of your lordship's wisdom to come and ask advice of one. —Ideot, by St. Patrick!—an ideot's a fool, and that's a christian name was never sprinkled upon Cornelius O'Dedimus, attorney at law!

Lord A. I can feel for the unfortunate girl as well as you, but the idea of marrying her is too ridiculous.

O'Ded. The unfortunate girl never knew misfortune 'till she knew you, my lord—and I heartily wish your lordship may never look more ridiculous than you would do in performing an act of justice and mercy.

Lord A. You presume strangely, Sir, on my confidence and condescension!

O'Ded. What! Are you coming over me now with the pride of your condescension.—*That* for your condescension!—when a great man, my lord,

does me the honor to confide in me, he'll find me trusty and respectful—but when he condescends to make me an agent and a partner in his iniquity, by your leave, from that moment there's an end of distinction between us.

Lord A. There's no enduring this !—Scoundrel!

O'Ded. Scoundrel! ditto, my lord, ditto! If I'm a scoundrel, it was you that made me one, and by St. Patrick, there's a brace of us.

Lord A. (*Aside*) The fellow has me in his power at present—you see me irritated, and you ought to bear with me—let us think of this no more.—The father and daughter must both be provided for out of that money which Sir Rowland still holds in trust for me.

O'Ded. And if you depend upon that money to silence the old man, you might as well think to stop a mouse-hole with toasted cheese.

Lord A. Pray explain, Sir.

O'Ded. Devil a penny of it is there left. Sir Rowland ventured it in a speculation, and all is lost—Oh! blister my tongue, I've let out the secret, sure enough—!

Lord A. Indeed! and what right had Sir Rowland to risk my property—be assured I will exact every guinea of it.

O'Ded. That's just what I told him. Sir, says I, his lordship is one of the flinty-hearted ones, and devil a thirteener will he forgive you—but, my lord, it will utterly ruin Sir Rowland to replace it.

Lord A. Sir Rowland should have thought of that before he embarked my property in a hazardous enterprize. Inform him, Sir, from me, that I expect an instant account of it.

O'Ded. I shall do that thing, Sir. But please

to reflect a little—the money, so laid out, was honestly intended for your advantage.

Lord A. Another word, Sir, and I shall think it necessary to employ another attorney.

O'Ded. Sir, that's a quietus—I've done—only remember that if you proceed to extremities, I warrant you'll repent it.

Lord A. You warrant—

O'Ded. Aye, Sir, and a warrant of attorney is reckoned decent good security.

Lord A. Since my uncle has so far forgotten his duty as a guardian, I have now an opportunity, which I shall not neglect, to bring him to a proper recollection—you have nothing to do but to obey my orders; and these are, that the fourteen thousand pounds, of which he has defrauded my estate, shall be immediately repaid—look to it, Sir, and to the other affair you are entrusted with, and see that the law neglects no measures to recover what is due to me. [*Exit.*

O'Ded. And by St. Patrick, if the law gives you what is due to you—that's—what I'm too polite to mention—you've had your swing in iniquity long enough, and such swings are very apt to end in one that's much too exalted for my notions. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *An apartment at Sir* WILLOUGHBY'S.

Enter Sir WILLOUGHBY, *and* WILLIAM *meeting him, the latter delivers a letter.*

Will. The gentleman desired me to say he is below, Sir.

Sir W. Hey? (*reads*) "My dear Worrett, I hope "that a long absence from my native land has

" not obliterated the recollection of our friend-
" ship. I have thought it right to adopt this
" method of announcing my return, lest my too
" sudden appearance should hurt *your* feelings by
" deranging the *delicate nerves* of your—*amiable*
" —*lady.*" Hey!

" Ever your's,
" FREDERICK FALKNER."

Bless my soul! Falkner alive—shew the gentleman up!

Will. He's here, Sir.

Enter FALKNER.

Falk. My old friend, I rejoice to see you.

Sir W. Friend Falkner, I shan't attempt to say how welcome your return is—we all thought you dead and buried—where have you been all these years?

Falk. A wanderer! Let that suffice.

Sir W. I see you still retain your old antipathy to answering questions, so I shall ask none—Have you been in France or among the Savages? Hey? I remember you had a daughter at school—is she alive? Is she merry or miserable? Is she married?

Falk. Zounds what a medly! France and Savages! marriage and misery!—

Sir W. Ods life I'm happy to see you! I hav'nt been so cheerful or happy for many a day.

Falk. How's your wife?

Sir. W. Hey! thankye, Sir! why that excellent, good, woman, is in high health—in astonishing health!—by my troth I speak it with unspeakable joy, I think she's a better life now than she was when I married her! (*in a melancholy tone.*)

Falk. That must be a source of *vast comfort* to you—I don't wonder at your being so cheerful and happy.

Sir W. True—but it is'nt *that*—that is, not altogether so—no—'tis that I once more hold my friend Falkner by the hand, and that my daughter—you remember your little favourite Helen—

Falkner. I do indeed !

Sir W. You are arrived at a critical moment—I mean shortly to marry her—

Falkner. I forbid the banns !—

Sir W. The devil you do !

Falkner. Pshaw ! *(aside)* my feelings o'erstep my discretion. Take care what you're about —If you're an honest man, you'd rather see her dead than married to a villain—

Sir W. To be sure I would—but the man I mean her to marry—

Falkner. Perhaps will never be her husband.

Sir W. The devil he wont !—why not ?

Falkner. Talk of something else—you know I was always an eccentric being—

Sir W. What the devil does he mean ?—yes, yes, you was always eccentric—but do you know—

Falkner. I know more than I wish to know ; I've lived long enough in the world to know that roguery fattens on the same soil where honesty starves ; and I care little whether time adds to information which opens to me more and more the depravity of human nature.

Sir W. Why, Falkner, you are grown more a misanthrope than ever.

Falkner You know well enough I have had my vexations in life—in an early stage of it I married—

Sir W. Every man has his trials !—

Falkner. About two years afterwards I lost my wife.

Sir W. That was a heavy misfortune! however you bore it with fortitude.

Falkner. I bore it easily. My wife was a woman without feelings—she had not energy for great virtue, and she had no vice, because she had no passion—life with her was a state of stagnation.

Sir W. How different are the fates of men!

Falkner. In the next instance I had a friend whom I would have trusted with my life—with more—my honour—I need not tell you then I thought him the first of human beings—but I was mistaken—he understood my character no better than I knew his—he confided to me a transaction which proved him to be a villain, and I commanded him never to see me more.

Sir W. Bless me! what was that transaction?

Falkner. It was a secret, and has remained so. Tho' I should have liked to hang the fellow, he had trusted me, and no living creature but himself and me at this day is possessed of it.

Sir W. Strange indeed; and what became of him?

Falkner. I have not seen him since, but I shall see him in a few hours.

Sir W. Indeed, is he in this neighbourhood?

Falkner. That circumstance of my friend, and a loss in the West Indies, which shook the fabric of my fortune to its foundation, drove me from the world—I am now returned to it with better prospects—my property which I then thought lost is doubled—circumstances have called me hither on an important errand, and before we are four and twenty hours older, you

may see some changes which will make you doubt your own senses for the remainder of your days—

Sir W. You astonish me mightily.

Falkner. Yes—you stare as if you were astonished: but why do I stay chattering here?—I must be gone.

Sir W. Nay, prythee now—

Falkner. Pshaw!—I have paid my first visit to you, because you are the first in my esteem—don't weaken it by awkward and unseasonable ceremony—I must now about the business that brings me here—no interruption—if you wish to see me again let me have my own way, and I may, perhaps, be back in half an hour.

Sir W. But I want to tell you that—

Falkner. I know—I know—you want to prove to me that you're the least talker, and the best husband in the county; but both secrets must keep till my return, when I shall be happy to congratulate you—and so farewell— [*Exit.*

Sir W. Bless my soul what can he mean?—"I forbid the banns"—"lost my wife"—"horrid transaction"—"back again in half an hour"—dear me—John—Thomas! Lady Worrett! Helen! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in Sir Willoughby Worrett's house. Helen and Charles meeting—Helen screams—they run towards each other as if to embrace—Charles stops suddenly.*

Helen. Charles! is it *you,* or is it your *spirit*?

Charles. 'Tis I, madam, and you'll find I have brought my *spirit* with me.

Helen. Hey! why what the deuce ails the man?

Charles. My presence here no doubt astonishes you.

Helen. Yes, sir, your presence *does* astonish me, but your manner still more.

Charles. I understand you—you would still keep a poor devil in your toils, tho' in his absence you have been sporting with *nobler* game.

Helen My good friend, will you descend from your heroical stilts, and explain your meaning in plain English?

Charles There needs no explanation of my conduct—call it caprice—say, if you please, that *I* am *altered*—say *I have changed my mind*, and love another better—

Helen. Indeed! and is it come to this! He shall not see he mortifies me however—*(aside)* Since you are in this mind, sir, I wish you had been pleased to signify the same by letter, sir—

Charles. By letter?

Helen. Yes, sir—for this personal visit being rather unexpected, does not promise to be particularly pleasant—

Charles. I believe so, madam—you did not calculate, I fancy, on this *sudden* return.

Helen. No indeed, sir—and should have shewn all Christian patience if this *sudden* return had'nt happened these *twelve months.*

Charles. The devil you would! madam!—but I'll be cool—I'll cut her to the heart with a razor of ice—I'll congeal her with indifference—you must know, madam—

Helen. Bless me, Charles, how very strangely you look—you're *pale* and *red*, and *red* and *pale*, in the same moment! why you can scarcely breathe! and now you tremble so! I'am afraid you are very ill.

Charles. Sarcastic!

Helen. You move all over like a ship in a storm!

Charles. Vastly well, madam—and now——

Helen, Your teeth chatter!—

Charles. Fire and faggots, madam, I *will* speak.

Helen. Do, dear Charles, while you are able —your voice will be gone in a minute or two and then—

Charles. I will be heard! (*bawling*)

Helen. That you will indeed—and all over the house, too.

Charles. Madam, will you hear me or not?

Helen. I am glad to find there's no affection of the lungs!

Charles. Death and torments! may I be allowed to speak—yes, or no?

Helen. Yes, but gently; and make haste before they call the watch.

Charles. Madam, madam—I wish to keep my temper—I wish to be cool.

Helen. Perhaps this will answer the purpose (*Fanning him*).

Charles. (*In confusion after a pause, aside,*) Is she laughing at me now—or trying to wheedle me into a good humour?—I feel, Miss Worrett, that I am expressing myself with too much warmth—I must therefore inform you that being ordered home with dispatches, and having some leisure time on my hands on my return; I thought it but proper as I passed the house to call at your door—just to say— a— a— just civilly to say—false! cruel! perfidious girl! you may break the tough heart of a sailor, but damn me if he will ever own it broke for love of you!

Helen. On my honor, sir, I do not understand what all this means.

Charles. You don't?—

Helen. No, sir—if your purpose here is insult, you might, methinks, have found some fitter object than one who has so limited a power to resent it! [*Going.*

Charles. Stay, madam—stay—what a face is there! a smile upon it too—oh Helen—spare those smiles—they once could wake my soul to extacy; but now they rouze it into madness: save them, madam, for a happier lover—save them for Lord Austencourt.

Helen. Charles—Charles, you have been deceived.—but come—sit down and hear me.

Charles. I am all attention, and listen to you with all that patience which the subject demands.

Helen. As you know the world, Charles, you cannot wonder that my father, (in the main a very good father, but in this respect, like all other fathers) should wish to unite his daughter to a man whose rank and fortune——

Charles. (*Rising in anger.*) Spare yourself the trouble of further explanation, madam; I see the whole at once—you are now going to tell me about prudence, duty, obedience, filial affection, and all the canting catalogue of fine phrases that serve to gloss over the giddy frailty of your sex, when you sacrifice the person and the heart at the frequented shrine of avarice and ambition!

Helen. (*Rising also.*) When I am next inclined to descend to explanation, sir, I hope you will be better disposed to attend to me. [*Going.*

Charles. A moment, madam! The whole explanation lies in a word—has not your father concluded a treaty of marriage between you and Lord Austencourt?

Helen. He *has*—

Charles. There—'tis enough! you have confessed it—

Helen. (*Stifling her tears.*) Confess'd what? you monster! I've confessed nothing.

Charles. Haven't you acknowledged that you are to be the wife of another?

Helen. No.—

Charles. No! won't you consent then?

Helen. Half an hour ago nothing on earth should have induced me to consent—but since I see, Charles, of what your temper is capable, I shall think it more laudable to risk my happiness by obedience to my father, than by an ill-judged constancy to one who seems so little inclined to deserve it. [*Exit.*

Charles. Hey? where am I? zounds! I see my whole error at once! oh, Helen, Helen—for mercy's sake one moment more?—She's gone—and has left me in anger!—but I will see her again, and obtain her forgiveness—fool, ideot, dolt, ass, that I am, to suffer my cursed temper to master reason and affection at the risk of losing the dearest blessing of life—a lovely and an amiable woman. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *O'Dedimus's office.*

Enter CHARLES *pulling in* PONDER *by the collar.*

Charles. THIS way, Sirrah, this way, and now out with your confession if you expect mercy at my hands.

Pon. I will, Sir, I will—but I expect no mercy at your hands, for you've already handled me most unmercifully—(*Charles shakes him*), what would you please to have me confess, sir?

Charles. I have seen old Abel Growse—he has told me the story of his daughter's marriage with this amiable cousin of mine—now, sirrah, confess the truth—were you present—or were you not?—out with it. (*shakes him*)

Pon. Now pray recollect yourself—do, sir—think a little.

Charles. Recollect myself?—

Pon. Aye, sir—if you will but take time to reflect, you'll give *me* time to collect my scattered thoughts, which you have completely shaken out of my pericranium.

Charles. No equivocation, answer directly, or tho' you are no longer my servant, by heavens I'll—

Pon. Sir—for heaven's sake!—you'll shake

nothing more out of me, depend on't—If you'll be pleased to pause a moment I'll think of an answer.

Charles. It requires no recollection to say whether you were a witness—

Pon. No indeed, sir—ask my master if I was—besides if I had been, my conscience would'nt let me disclose it.

Charles. Your conscience! good, and you're articled to an attorney!

Pon. True, sir—but there's a deal of conscience in our office—if my master knew I betrayed his secrets even to you, I believe (in conscience,) he'd hang me if he could.

Charles. If my old friend O'Dedimus proves a rogue at last, I shan't wonder that you have followed his example.

Pon. No, sir, for I always follow my master's example, even tho' it should be in the path of roguery—compliment apart sir, I always followed yours—

Charles. Puppy—you trifle with my patience.

Pon. No indeed, sir, I never play with edg'd tools.

Charles. You wont acknowledge it then.

Pon. Yes, sir, I'll acknowledge the truth, but I scorn a lie.

Charles. 'Tis true I always thought you honest—I have ever trusted you, Ponder, even as a friend—I do not believe you capable of deceiving me.

Pon. Sir! (*gulping*) I can't swallow that! it choaks me (*falling on his knees*) forgive me, dear master that *was*; your threats I could withstand—your violence I could bear, but your

kindness and good opinion there is no resisting; promise you wont betray me—

Charles. So; now it comes—I do—

Pon. Then, sir, the whole truth shall out—they *are* married, sir—and they are *not* married, sir—

Charles. Enigma too!

Pon. Yes, sir—they are married—but the priest was ordained by my master, and the licence was of his own granting—and so they are not married, and now the enigma's explained——

Charles. Your master then is a villain!

Pon. I don't know, sir—that puzzles me—but he's such an honest fellow I can hardly think him a rogue—tho' I fancy, sir, between ourselves he's like the rest of the world—half and half—or like punch, sir, a mixture of opposites——

Charles. So! villany has been thriving in my absence. If you feel the attachment you profess why did you not confide this to me before?

Pon. Sir, truth to speak, I did not tell you, because, knowing the natural gentleness of your disposition, which I have so often admired—I was alarmed, lest the sudden shock should cause one of those irascible fits, which I have so often witnessed, and produce some of those shakes and buffets, which to my unspeakable astonishment, I have so often experienced.

Charles. And which, I can tell you, you have now so narrowly escaped—

Pon. True sir, I have escaped as narrowly as a felon who gets his reprieve five minutes *after* execution.

Charles. Something must be done—I am involved in a quarrel with Helen too!—curse on my irritable temper—

Pon. So I say, sir—try and mend it—pray do—

Charles. I am resolved to have another interview with her;—to throw myself at her feet, and sue for pardon! Tho' fate should oppose our union, I may still preserve her from the arms of a villain, who is capable of deceiving the innocent he could not seduce; and of planting a dagger in the female heart, where nature has bestowed her softest attributes, and has only left it *weak*, that man might cherish, shelter, and protect it—

[*Exit.*

Pon. So! Now I'm a rogue both ways—If I escape punishment one way, I shall certainly meet it the other—But if my good luck saves me both ways I shall never more credit a fortune-teller—for one once predicted, that I was born to be hang'd, [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Sir Rowland's.*

Enter SIR ROWLAND *and* O'DEDIMUS.

Sir R. You have betrayed me then!———Did not I caution you to keep secret from my nephew this accursed loss.

O'Ded. And so you did sure enough—but somehow it slipt out before I said a word about it: but I told him it was a secret, and I dare say he wont mention it——

Sir R. But you say, that he demands the immediate liquidation—

O'Ded. Aye, sir, and has given me orders to proceed against you—

Sir R. Is it possible—in a moment could I arrest his impious progress—but I will probe him to the quick—did he threaten me, say you?—There is however one way to save *him* from this public

avowal of his baseness, and *me* from his intended persecution——a marriage between Charles and Mrs. Richland.

O'Ded. The widow's as rich as the Wicklow mines!

Sir R. The boy refuses to comply with my wishes; we may find means, however, to compel him—

O'Ded. He's a sailor; and gentlemen of his kidney are generally pretty tough when they take a notion in their heads.

Sir R. I am resolved to carry my point. I have reason to believe you advanced him a sum of money.

O'Ded. I did that thing—he's a brave fellow—I'd do that thing again—

Sir R. You did wrong, sir, to encourage a young spenthrift in disobedience to his father.

O'Ded. I did right, sir, to assist the son of a client, and the nephew of a benefactor, especially when his father had'nt the civility to do it.

Sir R. Mr. O'Dedimus, you grow impertinent.

O'Ded. Sir Rowland, I grow old; and 'tis one privilege of age to grow blunt. I advanced your son a sum of money, because I esteemed him.—I tack'd no usurious obligation to the bond he gave me, and I never came to ask you for security—

Sir R. You *have* his bond then—

O'Ded. I have, sir; his bond and judgment for two hundred pounds.

Sir R. It is enough—then you can indeed assist my views,—the dread of confinement will, no doubt, alter his resolution, you must enter up judgment, and proceed on your bond—

O'Ded. If I proceed upon my bond, it will be very much against my judgment—

Sir R. In order to alarm him, you must arrest him immediately—

O'Ded. Sir Rowland, I wish to treat you with respect—but when without a blush on your cheek you ask me to make myself a rascal, I must either be a scoundrel ready-made to your hands, for respecting you, or a damn'd hypocrite for pretending to do it—I see you are angry, sir, and I can't help that; and so, having delivered my message, for fear I should say any thing uncivil or ungenteel, I wish you a most beautiful good morning. [*Exit.*

Sir R. Then I have but one way left—my fatal secret must be publicly revealed—oh horror! ruin irretrievable is preferable—never—never—that secret shall die with *me.*—(*Enter Falkner*) as 'tis probably already buried in the grave with Falkner.

Falk. 'Tis false—'tis buried only in his heart!

Sir R. Falkner!

Falk. 'Tis eighteen years since last we met. You have not, I find, forgotten the theme on which we parted.

Sir R. Oh, no! my heart's reproaches never would allow me! Oh Falkner—I and the world for many years have thought you numbered with the dead.

Falk. To the world I was so—I have returned to it to do an act of justice.—

Sir R. Will you then betray me?

Falk. During eighteen years, sir, I have been the depositary of a secret, which, if it does not actually affect your life, affects what should be dearer than life, your honor.—If, in the moment that your ill-judged confidence avowed you as the man you are, and robbed me of that friend-

ship which I held sacred as my being—If in that bitter moment I concealed my knowledge of your guilt from an imperious principle of honor, It is not likely, that the years which time has added to my life, should have taught me perfidy—your secret still is safe—

Sir R. Oh, Falkner—you have snatched a load of misery from my heart—I breathe—I live again—

Falk. Your exultation flows from a polluted source—I return to the world to seek you—to warn and to expostulate—I come to urge you to brave the infamy you have deserved—to court disgrace as the punishment you merit—briefly to avow your guilty secret.

Sir R. Name it not for mercy's sake! It is impossible! How shall I sustain the world's contempt—its scorn—revilings and reproaches—?

Falk. Can he, who has sustained so long the reproaches of his conscience, fear the world's revilings?—Oh Austencourt! Once you had a heart.——

Sir R. Sir—it is callous now to every thing but shame, when it lost *you*, it's dearest only friend, its noblest feelings were extinguished—my crime has been my punishment, for it has brought on me nothing but remorse and misery—still is my fame untainted by the world, and I will never court its contumely—

Falk. You are determined—

Sir R. I am!

Falk. Have you no fear from me?

Sir R. None! You have renewed your promise, and I am safe.

Falk. Nothing then remains for me but to return to that obscurity from whence I have emerged

—had I found you barely leaning to the side of virtue, I had arguments to urge that might have fixed a wavering purpose, but I find you resolute—hardened and determined in guilt, and I leave you to your fate—

Sir R. Stay, Falkner—there is a meaning in your words—

Falk. A dreadful precipice lies before you, be wary how you tread! there is a being injured by your——by Lord Austencourt—see that he makes her reparation by an immediate marriage—look first to that—

Sir R. To such a degradation could *I* forget my noble ancestry, *he* never will consent.

Falk. Look next to yourself—he is not a half villain—and it is not the ties of consanguinity will save you from a jail. Beware how you proceed with Charles—you see I am acquainted with more than you suspected—look to it, sir, for the day is not yet passed that by restoring you to virtue, may restore to you a friend; or should you persevere in guilty silence, that may draw down unexpected vengeance on your head— [*Exit.*

Sir R. Mysterious man! a moment stay! I cannot live in this dreadful uncertainty! whatever is my fate, it shall be decided quickly.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment at Sir Willoughby's; a Door in the Flat.*

Enter HELEN *and* CHARLES.

Helen. I tell you, it is useless to follow me, sir. The proud spirit you evinced this morning,

might have saved you methinks from this meanness of solicitation—

Charles. Surely now a frank acknowledgement of error deserves a milder epithet than meanness—

Helen. As you seem equally disposed, sir, to quarrel with my words, as you are to question my conduct, I fear you will have little cause to congratulate yourself on this *forced* and *tiresome* interview—

Charles. Forced interview! Did ever woman so consider the anxiety of a lover to seek explanation and forgiveness!—Helen, Helen, you torture me—is this generous?—is it like yourself? surely if you lov'd me———

Helen. Charles—I do love you—that is—I *did* love you, but——I don't love you—but (*aside*) ah! now I'm going to make bad worse—

Charles. But *what*, Helen?

Helen. The violence of temper you have discovered this morning, has shewn me the dark side of your character; it has given a pause to affection, and afforded me time to reflect—now tho' I do really and truly believe that—you—love me Charles.

Sir W. (*behind*) I must see my daughter directly—where is she?

Enter TIFFANY *running.*

Tiffany. Ma'am, ma'am, your father's coming up stairs, with a letter in his hand, muttering something about Mr. Charles; as sure as life you'll be discovered.—

Helen. For heav'n's sake hide yourself—I would not have him find you here for worlds—here, step into the music-room.—

Charles. Promise me first your forgiveness—

Helen. Charles, retire, I entreat you—make haste—he is here—

Charles. On my knees———

Helen. Then kneel in the next room.

Charles. Give me but your hand——

Helen. That is now at my own disposal—I beseech you go—(*Charles just gains the door when enter Sir Willoughby with a letter in his hand, and Lady Worrett*——

Sir W. Gadzooks! Here's a discovery!

Helen. A discovery, sir? (*Helen looks at the door*).

Sir W. Aye, a discovery indeed!—Odslife! I'm in a furious passion!—

Helen. Dear Sir—not with me I hope——

Lady W. Let me entreat you Sir Willoughby to compose yourself—recollect that anger is very apt to bring on the gout.

Sir W. Damn the gout—I must be in a passion—my—life—harkye, daughter—

Helen. They know he's here! so I may as well own it at once.

Lady W. Pray compose yourself, remember we have no *proof*.

Sir W. Why that's true—that is remarkably true—I must compose myself—I *will*—I *do*—I *am* composed—and now let me open the affair with coolness and deliberation! Daughter, come hither.

Helen. Yes, sir—now for it!—

Sir W. Daughter, you are in general, a very good, dutiful, and obedient child—

Helen. I know it, papa—and was from a child, and I always will be.

Lady W. Allow me, Sir Willoughby—you are in general child, a very headstrong, disobedient, and undutiful daughter.

Helen. I know it, mamma—and was from a child, and always will be.

Lady W. How, madam!—Remember, Sir Willoughby—there is a proper medium between too violent a severity, and too gentle a lenity.

Sir W. Zounds, madam, in your own curs'd economy there is no medium—but don't bawl so, or we shall be overheard—

Lady W. Sir Willoughby, you are very ill I'm sure—but I must now attend to this business—daughter, we have heard that Charles———

Sir W. Lady Worrett, my—love—let *me* speak—you know, child, it is the duty of an *obedient* daughter, to *obey* her parents.—

Helen. I know it, papa—and when I obey *you*, I am, *generally, obedient.*

Lady W. In short, child, I say again,—we learn that Charles———

Sir W. Lady Worrett, Lady Worrett, you are too abrupt—od-rabbit it, madam, I will be heard—this affair concerns the *honor* of my family, and on this *one* occasion, I *will* be my own spokesman.

Lady W. Oh heavens! Your violence affects my brain.

Sir. W. Does it? I wish it would affect your tongue, with all my heart—bless my soul, what have I said! Lady Worrett! Lady Worrett! you drive me out of my senses, and then wonder that I act like a madman—

Lady W. Barbarous man—your cruelty will break my heart, and I shall leave you, Sir Willoughby, to deplore my loss, in unavailing despair, and everlasting anguish. [*Exit.*

Sir W. (*aside*) I am afraid not—such despair and anguish will never be my—happy—lot!—bless me how quiet the room is—what can be——

oh my wife's gone!—now then we may proceed to business——and so daughter, this young fellow, Charles, has dared to return in direct disobedience to his father's commands.

Helen. I had better confess it all at once—he has, he has—my dear papa, I do confess, it was very, very wrong—but pray now do forgive—

Sir W. I—forgive him—never—nor his father will never forgive him, Sir Rowland writes me here, to take care of you, I have before given him my solemn promise to prevent your meeting, and I am sorry to say, I hav'nt the least doubt that you know he is here, and will—

Helen. I do confess, *he is* here papa—

Sir W. Yes, you'll confess it fast enough, now I've found it out—

Helen. Indeed I was so afraid you would find it out, that I——

Sir W. Find it out!—his father writes me word, he has been here in the village these three hours!

Helen. In the *village!*—Oh, what you heard he was in the *village?*

Sir W. Yes, and being afraid he should find his way to my house, egad I never was brisker after the fox-hounds, than I was after you, in fear of finding you at a fault, you puss—

Helen. Oh! you were afraid he should come *here*, were you?—

Sir W. Yes, but I'll take care he shan't—however, as my maxim is (now my wife doesn't hear me), to trust your sex no farther than I can possibly help—I shall just put you, my dear child, under lock and key, 'till this young son of the ocean, is bundled off to sea again.

Helen. What! lock me up?

Sir W. Damme if I dont—come walk into that room, and I'll take the key with me. *(Pointing to the room where Charles entered).*

Helen. Into *that* room?

Sir W. Yes.—

Helen. And do you think I shall stay there by myself?

Sir W. No, no—here Tiffany! (ENTER TIFFANY)—Miss Pert, here, shall keep you company—I'll have no whisperings thro' key-holes, nor letters thrust under doors.

Helen. And you'll really lock me up in that room!

Sir W. Upon my soul I will.—

Helen. Now dear papa, be persuaded—take my advice, and don't—

Sir W. If I *don't*, I wish you may be in Charles Austencourt's arms in three minutes from this present speaking.

Helen. And if you *do*,—take my word for it I might be in his arms if I chose, in less than two minutes from this present warning.

Sir W. Might you so? Ha! ha! I'll give you leave if you can—for unless you jump into them out of the window, I'll defy the devil and all his imps to bring you together.

Helen. We shall come together without their assistance depend on it, papa.

Sir W. Very well—and now, my dear, walk in.

Helen. With all my heart, only remember you had better not.—(*He puts her in.*)

Sir W. That's a good girl—and you, you baggage, in with you (*to Tiffany, who goes in.*)

Sir W. (*Shuts the door and locks it,*) "Safe bind,

safe find," is one of my lady Worrett's favourite proverbs; and that's the only reason why I in general dislike it. *(Going.)*

Enter FALKNER.

Sir W. Once more welcome, my dear Falkner. What brings you back so soon?

Falk. You have a daughter—

Sir W. Well, I know I have.

Falk. And a wife—

Sir W. I'm much obliged to you for the information—You have been a widower some years I believe.

Falk. What of that, do you envy me?

Sir W. Envy you, what, because you are a widower? Eh! Zounds, I believe he is laughing at me (*aside.*)

Falk. I am just informed that every thing is finally arranged between your lady and his lordship respecting Helen's marriage.

Sir W. Yes, every thing is happily settled.

Falk. I am sincerely sorry to hear it.

Sir W. You are! I should have thought Mr. Falkner, that my daughter's happiness was dear to you.

Falk. It is, and therefore I do not wish to see her married to Lord Austencourt.

Sir W. Why then what the devil is it you mean?

Falk. To see her married to the man of her heart, with whom I trust to see her as happy—as you are with Lady Worrett.

Sir W. Yes, ha! ha! ha! yes! but you are in jest respecting my daughter.

Falk. No matter! where is Helen?

Sir W. Safe under lock and key.

Falk. Under lock and key!

Sir W. Aye, in that very room—I've lock'd her up to keep her from that hot-headed young rogue Charles Austencourt—should you like to see her? she's grown a fine young woman!

Falk. With all my heart!

Sir W. You'll be surprised, I can tell you—

Falk. I dare say—

Sir W. We'll pop in upon her when she least expects it—I'll bet my life you'll be astonished at her appearance.

Falk. Well, I shall be glad to see your daughter—but she must not marry this Lord.

Sir W. No! who then?

Falk. The man she loves—

Sir W. Hey! Oh yes! but who do you mean? Charles Austencourt? (*Opening the door.*)

Enter LADY WORRETT, *suddenly.*

Lady W. Charles Austencourt!

Falk. (*Aloud and striking the floor with his stick*) Aye.—Charles Austencourt.—

Charles, (*entering*) Here am I. who calls?

[HELEN *and* TIFFANY *come forward and* TIFFANY *goes off.*

Sir W. Fire and faggots! what do I see—

Lady W. Ah! heavens defend me what do I behold!

Falk. Why is this the surprise you promised me? the astonishment seems general. Pray, Sir Willoughby, explain this puppet show!

Lady W. Aye! pray Sir Willoughby explain—

Sir W. Curse me if I can.

Helen. I told you how it would be, papa, and you would not believe me!

Sir W. So! pray, sir, condescend to inform Lady Worrett and me, how you introduced yourself into that most extraordinary situation.

Charles. Sir, I shall make no mystery of it, nor attempt to screen you from her Ladyship's just reproaches, by concealing one atom of the truth. The fact is, madam, that Sir Willoughby not only in my hearing, gave Miss Helen his unrestricted permission to throw herself into my arms, but actually forced her into the room where I was quietly seated, and positively and deliberately lock'd us in together!

Lady W. Oh! I shall expire!

Sir W. I've heard of matchless impudence, but curse me if this isn't the paragon of the species! Zounds! I'm in a wonderful passion! Daughter, I am resolved to have this affair explained to my satisfaction.

Helen. You *may* have it explained, papa, but I fear it won't be to your *satisfaction.*

Charles. No, sir—nor to her Ladyship's either—and now, as my situation here is not remarkably agreeable I take my leave—madam, your most obedient—and Sir Willoughby, the next time you propose an agreeable surprise for your friends——

Sir W. Harkye sir—how you came into my house I can't tell—but if you don't presently walk out of it—

Charles. I say—I heartily hope that you may accomplish your purpose——

Sir W. Zounds, sir, leave my house——

Charles. Without finding yourself the most astonished of the party! [*Exit.*

Sir W. Thank heaven my house is rid of him.

Lady W. As usual, Sir Willoughby, a precious business you've made of this!

Sir W. Death and furies, my Lady Worrett——

Falk. Gently, my old friend, gently—I'm one too many here during these little domestic discus-

sions—but before I go, on two points let me caution you; let your daughter choose her own husband if you wish her to have one without leaping out of window to get at him; and be master of your own house and your own wife if you do not wish to continue, what you now are, the laughing-stock of all your acquaintanee.—— [*Exit.*

Lady W. Ah! the barbarian!

Sir W. (*Appears astonished*) I'm thunderstruck—(*makes signs to Helen to go before.*)

Helen. Won't you go first, papa?

Sir W. Hey? If I lose sight of you till you've explained this business, may I be laid up with the gout while you are galloping to Gretna Green! "Be master of your house and wife if you don't wish to continue, *what you now are!*—Hey? the laughing-stock of all your acquaintance! Sir Willoughby Worrett the laughing-stock of all his acquaintance! I think I see myself the laughing-stock of all my acquaintance!—(*pointing to the door*) I'll follow you ladies! I'll reform! 'tis never too late to mend! [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Sir Willoughby Worrett's.*

Enter SIR WILLOUGHBY *and* LADY WORRETT.

Sir W. Lady Worrett! Lady Worrett! I will have a reform. I am at last resolved to be master of my own house, and so let us come to a right understanding, and I dare say we shall be the better friends for it in future.

Lady W. You shall see, Sir Willoughby, that I can change as suddenly as yourself. Though you have seen my delicate system deranged on *slight* occasions, you will find that in essential ones I have still spirit for resentment.

Sir W. I'll have my house in future conducted as a gentleman's should be, and I will no longer suffer my wife to make herself the object of ridicule to all her servants. So I'll give up the folly of wishing to be thought a *tender* husband, for the real honour of being found a *respectable* one. I'll make a glorious bonfire of all your musty collection of family receipt-books! and when I deliver up your keys to an honest housekeeper, I'll keep one back of a snug apartment in which to deposit a rebellious wife.

Lady W. That will be indeed the way to make

yourself respectable. I have found means to manage you for some years, and it will be my own fault if I don't do so still.

Sir W. Surely I dream! what? have you *managed* me? Hey? Zounds! I never suspected that. Has Sir Willoughby Worrett been lead in leading-strings all this time? Death and forty devils, Madam, have you presumed to manage *me?*

Lady W. Yes, Sir; but you had better be silent on the subject, unless you mean to expose yourself to your daughter and all the world.

Sir W. Aye, Madam, with all my heart; my daughter and all the world shall know it.

Enter HELEN.

Helen. Here's a pretty piece of work!—what's the matter now, I wonder?

Lady W. How dare you overhear our domestic dissentions. What business have you to know we were quarrelling, Madam?

Helen. Lord love you! if I had heard it, I should not have listened—for its nothing new, you know, when you're *alone*; though you both look so *loving* in *public*.

Sir W. That's true—that is *lamentably* true—but all the world *shall* know it—I'll proclaim it—I'll print it—I'll advertize it!—She has usurped my rights and my power; and her fate, as every usurper's should be, shall be *public* downfall and disgrace.

Helen. What, papa! and won't you let mamma-in-law rule the roast any longer?

Sir W. No!—I am resolved from this moment no longer to give way to her absurd whims and wishes.

Helen. You are!

Sir W. Absolutely and immoveably.

Helen. And you *will* venture to contradict her?

Sir W. On every occasion—right or wrong.

Helen. That's right—Pray, Madam, don't you wish me to marry Lord Austencourt?

Lady W. You know my *will* on that head, Miss Helen.

Helen. Then, papa, of course you wish me to marry *Charles* Austencourt.

Sir W. What! no such thing—no such thing—what! marry a beggar?

Helen. But you won't let Mama rule the roast, will you, Sir?

Sir W. 'Tis a great match! I believe in that *one* point we shall still agree—

Lady W. You may spare your persuasions, Madam, and leave the room—

Sir W. What—my daughter leave the room? Stay here, Helen.

Helen. To be sure I shall—I came on purpose to tell you the news! oh, tis a pretty piece of work!

Sir W. What does the girl mean?

Helen. Why, I mean that in order to ruin a poor innocent girl, in our neighbourhood, this amiable Lord has prevailed on her to consent to a private marriage—and it now comes out that it was all a mock marriage, performed by a sham priest, and a false license!

Lady W. I don't believe one word of it.

Sir W. But I do—and shall inquire into it immediately.

Lady W. Such a match for your daughter is not to be relinquished on slight grounds; and though his Lordship should have been guilty of

some indiscretion, it will not alter my resolution respecting his union with Helen.

Sir W. No—but it will mine—and to prove to you, Madam, that however you may rule your household, you shall no longer rule *me*—if the story has any foundation—I say—she *shall not* marry Lord Austencourt.

Lady W. Shall not?

Sir W. No, Madam, shall not—and so ends your management, and thus begins my career of new-born authority. I'm out of leading-strings now, and Madam, I'll manage you, damn me if —I—do—not! [*Exit Sir Willoughby.*

Helen (*to Lady W.*) You hear papa's *will* on that head, Ma'am.

Lady W. I hear nothing!—I see nothing!—I shall go mad with vexation and disappointment, and if I do not break his resolution, I am determined to break his heart; and my *own* heart, and *your* heart, and the hearts of all the rest of the family. [*Exit.*

Helen. There she goes, with a laudable matrimonial resolution. Heigho! with such an example before my eyes, I believe I shall never have resolution to die an old maid. Oh, Charles, Charles —why did you take me at my word?—Bless me! sure I saw him then—'tis he indeed! So, my gentleman, are you there? I'll just retire and watch his motions a little (*retires.*)

Enter Charles Austencourt, cautiously.

Charles. What a pretty state am I reduced to? though I am resolved to speak with this ungrateful girl but once more before I leave her for ever,

here am I, skulking under the enemy's batteries as though I was afraid of an encounter!—Yes, I'll see her, upbraid her, and then leave her for ever! heigho! she's a false, deceitful—dear, bewitching girl, and—however, I am resolved that nothing on earth—not even her tears, shall now induce me to forgive her. (*Tiffany crosses the stage.*)

Charles. Ha!—harkye, young woman! pray are the family at home?

Tiffany. My lady is at home, Sir—would you please to see her?

Charles. Your lady—do you mean your *young* lady?

Tiffany. No, Sir, I mean my *lady.*

Charles. What, your *old* lady?—No—I don't wish to see *her.* Are all the rest of the family from home—

Tiffany. No, Sir—Sir Willoughby is within—I'll tell him you are here, (*going.*)

Charles. By no means—stay—stay! what then, they are all at home except Miss Helen.

Tiffany. She's at home too, Sir—but I suppose she don't wish to see you.

Charles. You suppose!

Tiffany. I'm sure she's been in a monstrous ill-humour ever since you came back, Sir—

Charles. The devil she has!—and pray now are you of opinion that my return is the cause of her ill-humour?

Tiffany. Lord, Sir—what interest have I in knowing such things?—

Charles. Interest!—oh, ho! the old story! why hark ye, my dear—your mistress has a lord for her lover, so I suppose he has secured a warmer interest than I can afford to purchase—however, I know the custom, and thus I comply with it, in

hopes you will tell me whether you really think my return has caused your young mistress' ill-humour——(*gives money*).

Tiffany. A guinea! well! I declare! why really, Sir—when I say Miss Helen has been out of humour on your account, I don't mean to say it is on account of your *return*, but on account of your going away again—

Charles. No! my dear Tiffany!

Tiffany. And I am sure I don't wonder at her being cross about it, for if I was my mistress I never would listen with patience (any more than she does) to such a disagreeable creature as my lord, while such a generous nice gentleman as you was ready to make love to me.

Charles. You couldn't?

Tiffany. No, Sir—and I'm sure she's quite altered and melancholy gone since you quarrelled with her, and she vows now more than ever that she never will consent to marry my lord, or any body but you—(*Helen comes forward gently.*)

Charles. My dear Tiffany!—let me catch the sounds from your rosy lips. (*Kisses her*)—

Helen. (*separating them*) Bless me! I am afraid I interrupt business here!

Charles. I—I—I—Upon my soul, Madam—what you saw was—

Tiff. Ye—ye—yes—upon my word, Ma'am—what you saw was.—

Helen. What I saw was very clear indeed!—

Charles. Hear me but explain—you do not understand.—

Helen. I rather think I *do* understand—

Tiffany. Indeed, Ma'am, Mr. Charles was only *whispering* something I was to tell you—

Helen. And pray, Ma'am, do you suffer gentle-

men in general to whisper in that fashion?—what do you stand stammering and blushing there for? —why don't you go?

Tiffany. Yes, Ma'am,—but I assure you—

Helen. What! you stay to be whispered to again, I suppose. [*Exit Tiffany.*

Charles. Let me explain this,—oh, Helen—can you be surprised?—

Helen. No, Sir, I can't be surprised at any thing after what I have just witnessed—

Charles. On my soul, it was excess of joy at hearing you still lov'd me, that led me into this confounded scrape.

Helen. Sir, you should not believe it—I don't love you. I wont love you,—and after what I have just seen, you can't expect I should love you—

Charles. Helen! Helen! you make no allowance for the fears of a man who loves you to distraction. I have borne a great deal, and can bear but very little more—

Helen. Poor man! you're sadly loaded with grievances, to be sure; and by and by, I suppose, like a horse or a mule, or some such stubborn animal, having more than you can bear, you'll kick a little, and plunge a little, and then down on your *knees* again!

Charles. I gloried even in that humble posture, while you taught me to believe you lov'd me.

Helen. 'Tis true, my heart was once your own, but I never can, nor ought to forgive you—for thinking me capable of being unfaithful to you.

Charles. Dearest dear Helen! and has your anger then no other cause? surely you could not blame a resentment which was the offspring of my fond affection?

Helen. No! to be sure I couldn't, who could! —but what should I not have to dread from the violence of your temper, if I consented—to run away with you?

Charles. Run away with me!—no!—zounds I've a chaise in waiting—

Helen. Have you?—then pray let it wait,—no! no! Charles—tho' I haven't scrupled to own an affection for you, I have too much respect for the world's opinion,—let us wait with patience,—time may rectify that impetuosity of character, which is now, I own, my dread; think of it, Charles, and beware; for affection is a frail flower, reared by the hand of gentleness, and perishes as surely by the shocks of violence as by the more gradual poison of neglect.

Charles. Dearest Helen! I will cherish it in my heart—'tis a *rough* soil I own, but 'tis a *warm* one; and when the hand of delicacy shall have cultivated this flower that is rooted there, the blossom shall be everlasting love!

Helen. Ah you men!—you men! but—I think I may be induced to try you.—Meantime, accept my hand, dear Charles, as a pledge of my heart, and as the assurance that it shall one day be your own indeed *(he kisses her hand.)* There you needn't eat it—there!—now make your escape, and farewell till we meet again.—

(*They are going out severally*)

Enter Sir Rowland *and* Sir Willoughby, *at opposite sides.*

Charles. Zounds! my Father!

Helen. Gad a mercy! my papa!

Sir R. So, Sir! you are here again I find!

Sir W. So! so! Madam! together again, hey? Sir Rowland, your servant.

Sir R. I need not tell you, Sir Willoughby, that this undutiful boy's conduct does not meet with my sanction.

Charles. No! Sir Willoughby—I am sorry to say my conduct seldom meets with my father's sanction.

Sir W. Why look ye, Sir Rowland, there are certain things that we *do* like, and certain things that we do *not* like—now, Sir, to cut the matter short, I do like my daughter to marry, but I do not like either your son, or your nephew for her husband.

Sir R. This is a very sudden *change*, Sir Willoughby—

Sir W. Yes, Sir Rowland, I have made two or three sudden changes to day!—I've changed my resolution—I feel changed myself—for I've changed characters with my wife, and with your leave I mean to change my son-in-law.

Sir R. Of course, Sir, you will give me a proper explanation of the last of these changes.

Sir W. Sir, if you'll meet me presently at your attorney's, the thing will explain itself—This way, young lady, if you please—Charles, I believe you are a devilish honest fellow, and I want an honest fellow for a son-in-law—but I think it is rather too much to give twelve thousand a year for him—this way Miss Helen.

[*Exit Sir Willoughby and Helen.*

Sir R. This sudden resolution of Sir Willoughby will still more exasperate him—I must seek him instantly, for the crisis of my fate is at hand; my own heart is witness against me—Heaven is my judge, and I have deserved my punishment!

[*Exit Sir R.*

Charles. So! I'm much mistaken, or there'll be a glorious bustle presently at the old lawyer's—He has sent to beg I'll attend, and as my heart is a little at rest in this quarter, I'll e'en see what's going forward in *that*—whether his intention be to *expose* or to *abet* a villain, still I'll be one amongst them; for while I have a heart to feel and a hand to act, I can never be an idle spectator when insulted virtue raises her supplicating voice on one side, and persecution dares to lift his unblushing head on the other. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*O'Dedimus's Office.*

Enter O'DEDIMUS *and* PONDER.

O'Ded. You've done the business, you say!

Pon. Aye, and the parties will all be here presently.

O'Ded. That's it! you're sure you haven't blabbed now?

Pon. Blabbed! ha, ha, ha! what do you take me for?

O'Ded. What do I take you for, Mr. Brass? Why I take you for one that will never be choaked by politeness.

Pon. Why, Lord, Sir, what could a lawyer do without impudence? for tho' they say "honesty's the best policy" a lawyer generally finds his purpose better answered by a *Policy of Assurance.*

O'Ded. But hark! somebody's coming already, step where I told you, and make haste.

Pon. On this occasion I lay by the lawyer and take up the Christian. Benevolence runs fast—but law is lazy and moves slowly. [*Exit.*

Enter FALKNER *as* ABEL GROWSE.

Abel Growse. I have obeyed your summons! what have you to say in palliation of the injury you have done me!

O'Ded. Faith and I shall say a small matter about it. What I have done I have performed, and what I have performed I shall justify.

Abel Growse. Indeed! can you justify fraud and villany—To business, Sir—wherefore am I summoned here?

O'Ded. That's it!—upon my conscience I'm too modest to tell you.

Abel Growse. Nature and education have made you modest, you were born an Irishman and bred an attorney—

O'Ded. And take my word for it, when nature forms an Irishman, if she makes some little blunder in the contrivance of his head, it is because she bestows so much pains on the construction of his heart.

Abel Growse. That may be partially true—but to hear *you* profess sentiments of feeling and justice reminds me of our advertising money-lenders who, while they practice usury and extortion on the world, assure them that "the strictest honor and liberality may be relied on;"—and now, Sir—once more—your business with me—

O'Ded. Sure, Sir, I sent for you to ask one small bit of a favor.

Abel Growse. From me?!

O'Ded. Aye—from you—and the favor is, that before you honor me with the appellation of scoundrel, villain, pettifogger, and some other such little genteel epithets, you will be pleased to examine my *title* to such distinctions.

Abel Growse. From you, however, I have no hopes. You have denied your presence at the infamous and sacrilegious mockery of my daughter's marriage.

O'Ded. That's a—mistake, Sir—I never did deny it—

Abel Growse. Ha! you acknowledge it then!

O'Ded. That's another mistake, Sir, for I never did acknowledge it.

Abel Growse. Fortunately, my hopes rest on a surer basis than your honesty; circumstances have placed in one of my hands the scales of justice, and the other her sword for punishment.

O'Ded. Faith, Sir, tho' you may be a fit representative of the old blind gentlewoman called Justice, she showed little discernment when she pitched upon you and overlooked Mr. Cornelius O'Dedimus, attorney at law. And now, Sir, be pleased to step into that room and wait a moment while I transact a little business with one who is coming yonder.

Abel Growse. I came hither to obey you, for I have some suspicion of your intentions; and let us hope that one virtuous action, if you have courage to perform it, will serve as a sponge to all the roguery you have committed, either as an attorney or as a man. [*Exit to an inner room.*

O'Ded. That blunt little fellow has got a sharp tongue in his head. He's an odd compound; just like a great big roasted potatoe all crusty and crabbed without, but mealy and soft-hearted within—He takes me to be half a rogue and all the rest of me a scoundrel—Och! by St. Patrick! I'll bother his brains presently.

Enter SIR ROWLAND, LORD AUSTENCOURT *and* CHARLES.

Lord A. Further discussion, Sir is useless.—If I am to be disappointed in this marrriage, a still more strict attention to my own affairs is necessary.

Sir R. I appeal fearlessly to this man, who has betrayed me, whether your interest was not my sole motive in the appropriation of your property.

Lord A. That assertion, Sir, I was prepared to hear, but will not listen to—

Sir R. Beware, Lord Austencourt, *beware* how you *proceed!*—

Lord A. Do you again threaten me? (*To O'Dedimus*) are my orders obeyed? is every thing in readiness?

O'Ded. The officers are in waiting!

Charles. Hold, monster—proceed at your peril.—To *me* you shall answer this atrocious conduct.

Lord A. To you?

Charles. Aye, Sir, *to me,* if you have the courage of a man!

Lord A. I will no longer support these insults—call in the officers!

Enter SIR WILLOUGHBY, LADY WORRETT, *and* HELEN.

Sir W. Hey! Zounds, did you take me and my Lady Worrett for sheriff's officers, my Lord?

Lord A. I have one condition to propose—If that lady accepts my hand I consent to stop the proceedings—that alone can alter my purpose.

Charles. Inhuman torturer!

Helen. Were my heart as free as air, I never would consent to a union with such a monster!

Sir W. And if *you* would, curse me if *I* would —nor my Lady Worrett either.—

Sir R. Let him fulfil his purpose if he dare! I now see the black corruptness of his heart; and tho' my life were at stake, I would pay the forfeit, rather than immolate innocence in the arms of such depravity.

Lord A. Call in the officers, I say!

O'Ded. (Without moving) I shall do that thing!

Lord A. 'Tis justice I demand—justice and revenge alike direct me, and their united voiceshall be obeyed.

Falkner. (*enters suddenly*) They shall! behold me here, thou miscreant, to urge it! justice and revenge you call for, and they shall both fall heavily upon you.

Sir R. Falkner!

O'Ded. What! Abel Growse, Mr. Falkner! here's a transmogrification for you!

Sir R. How! Falkner,and the unknown Cottager the same person?—

Falkner. Aye, Sir! the man who cautioned you to day in vain—who warned you of the precipice beneath your feet,and was unheeded by you—

Sir R. Amazement! what would you have me do?

Falkner. Before this company assist me with the power you possess (and that power is ample) to compel your haughty nephew to repair the injury, which in an humbler character, he has done me—

Lord A. He compel me! ridiculous!

Falkner. (*To Sir Rowland*) Insensible to injury and insult! can nothing move you?—*Reveal your secret!*

Lord A. I'll hear no more,—summon the officers I say—I am resolved!—

Sir R. I too, am at last resolved! at length the arm is raised that, in descending, must crush you.

Lord A. I despise your united threats—am I to be the sport of insolence and fraud?—*What*, am I, Sir, that thus you dare insult me—*Who* am I?

Sir R. No longer the man you seem to be! hear me! before grief and shame shall burst my heart, hear me proclaim my guilt!—When the late Lord Austencourt dying bequeathed his infant son to my charge, my own child was of the same age! prompted by the dæmons of ambition and blinded to guilt by affection for my own offspring—I CHANGED THE CHILDREN!

Charles. Merciful heaven!

Sir R. (to Lord A.) Hence it follows that you —unnatural monster—are my son!

Sir W. Odds life! Hey, then there is something in the world to astonish me, besides the reformation of my Lady Worrett.

Lord A. Shallow artifice! think you I am weak enough to credit this preposterous fiction, or do you suppose the law will listen to it?—

Falk. Aye, Sir! the law *will* listen to it—*shall* listen to it—*I*, Sir, can prove the fact beyond even the hesitation of incredulity!

Lord A. You!

Falk. I.—You have seen me hitherto a poor man, and oppressed me—you see me now rich and powerful, and well prepared to punish your villany; and thus, in every instance, may oppression recoil on the oppressor.

Lord A. Then I am indeed undone!

O'Ded. Shall I call the officers now, my lord? Mr. Austencourt, I should say—I ask pardon for

the blunder—and now ladies and gentlemen be pleased to hear me speak—this extraordinary discovery is just exactly what I *did not* expect. It is true, I had a bit of a discovery of my own to make—for I find that the habits of my profession tho' they haven't led me to commit arts of knavery have too often induced me to *wink* at them—Therefore, as his quondam Lordship has now *certainly* lost Miss Helen, I hope he'll have no objection to do justice in another quarter. [*Exit.*

Sir R. Oh, Charles! my much injured nephew! how shall I ever dare to look upon you more?

Charles. Nay, nay, Sir—I am too brimfull of joy at my opening prospects here (*taking Helen's hand*) to cherish any other feeling than forgiveness and good-humour. Here is my hand, Sir, and with it I pledge myself to oblivion of *all* the past, except the acts of kindness I have received from you.

Sir W. That's a noble, generous young dog—My Lady Worrett, I wonder whether he'll offer to marry Helen now?

Lady W. Of course, after what has passed, you'll think it decent to refuse for a short time: but you are the best judge, Sir Willoughby, and your will shall in future be mine—

Sir W. Shall it—that's kind—then I *will* refuse him to please you—for when you're so reasonable, how can I do otherwise than oblige you—

(*Lady W. aside.*) Leave me alone to manage him still.

Enter O'Dedimus *introducing* Fanny.

(*Lord A. seeing Fanny.*) Ah, traitor!

O'Did. Traitor back again into your teeth, my

master! and since you've neither pity for the poor innocent, nor compassion for the little blunt gentleman her father, 'tis time to spake out and to tell you that instead of a sham priest and a sham licence for your deceitful marriage as you bid me, I have sarved the cause of innocence and my own soul, by procuring a *real* priest and a *real* licence, and by St. Patrick you are as much *one* as any *two* people in England, Ireland, or Scotland!

Fanny. Merciful powers! there is still justice for the unfortunate!

Lord A. (*after a conflict of passion.*) And is this really so?

O'Ded. You're *Man* and *Wife* sure enough—We've decent proof of this too, Sir!

Lord A. You no doubt expect this intelligence will exasperate me. 'Tis the reverse—by Heaven it lifts a load of guilty wretchedness from my heart.

Fanny. Oh, my lord! my husband!

Falkner. Can this be genuine?—sudden reformation is ever doubtful—

Lord A. It is real! my errors have been the fruits of an unbridled education—ambition dazzled me, and wealth was my idol I have acted like a villain, and as my conduct has deserved no forgiveness, so will my degradation be seen without compassion—but this weight of guilt removed, I will seek happiness and virtue in the arms of my much injured Fanny.

Fanny. Silent joy is the most heartfelt—I cannot speak my happiness! My Father!

Falkner. This is beyond my hopes; but adversity is a salutary monitor.

Sir R. Still, Charles, to you I am indebted beyond the power of restitution.

Charles. My dear Father—no—my dear Uncle, I mean. Here is the reward I look for.

Helen. Ah, Charles—(my Lord, I mean, I beg pardon)—to be sure Papa—aye and mamma-in-law too will now no longer withhold their consent.

Sir W. Who me? not for the world—Hey? mercy on us I forgot your Ladyship (*aside*) do you wish me to decline the honor?

Lady W. (*aside*) Why no—as matters have turned out.

Charles. Then Fortune has indeed smiled on me to day!

Falk. The cloud of sorrow is passed, and may the sun of joy that now illumines my face, diffuse its cheering rays on all around us.

O'Did. And Sir Willoughby and her ladyship will smile most of us all—for every body knows they're the happiest man and wife among us.

Helen. And while amongst ourselves we anxious trace
The doubtful smile of joy in every face,
There *is* a smile, which *doubt* and *danger* ends——
The smile of approbation from our friends.

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Why, like a culprit!—trembling in his shoes—
There—at the bar he stands, and frets and stews—
Anxious he lists—to hear how vastly well
His *Counsel's* (Mrs. JORDAN'S) speeches *tell!*
Tho' loudest plaudits he can scarcely hear,
The slightest sibilation *stuns* his ear!
An Author's *ear!*—'Tis wondrous at a hiss
How very delicate that organ is!
A hiss!—what does he then look like?—Gadzooks
You can't conceive how like a *fool* he looks!
Critics—his judges—faith he don't like them—
He dreads their caustic cough—and damning *hem!*
The *jury*—you—and here in judgment sit,
Nature (*Upper Gallery*)—Sense (*Pit*)—Learning (*Boxes*)—Humour
(*Lower Gallery*)—Taste (*Boxes*)—and Wit (*Pit*).
Freedom, Mirth, Honour, Justice, Truth, are here,
And Candour's honest foreman every where!
He's quite content, good folks—while such shall throng ye
He doesn't mean to *challenge* one among ye!

Then what's an Author like?—there's no denial—
He's like—to have a fair—an English trial!
Approv'd—he may be like the soil that pays
The fostering hand that tries the germ to raise:—
Condemn'd—he's like—he's like—gad, who can say
What the man's like, if you should damn his play?
In short—if you to-night condemn his pen,
He's like—Oh no—he's *never* like to write again!

And now—as brevity's the soul of wit we know,
You all—most likely—would like me to go!

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